

A Proclamation
By
Governor Ronnie Musgrove

WHEREAS, Alva James Peyton Jr. was born October 11, 1923, on the outskirts of Greenville—he attended Greenville’s Number Two Elementary School and Coleman High School; and

WHEREAS, in 1943, he joined the U.S. Navy and served as a steward’s mate until his discharge on November 5, 1945; and

WHEREAS, A.J. Peyton returned home to work for his mother, the late Beatrice Huddleston, as assistant manager at the funeral home founded by his stepfather T.J. Huddleston Sr.; and

WHEREAS, Judge Peyton graduated from Gupton Jones College of Mortuary Science in Nashville in 1948 and worked 49 years as a general manager and chief mortician of Century Funeral Homes; and

WHEREAS, Judge Peyton later became an entrepreneur in his own right, owning and operating his own barber shop, restaurant, and night club—he also operated a food stand at the county fair and booked performances in Yazoo City for many of the now famous black singers, including B.B. King, Bobby Blue Bland, Little Milton, and Ike and Tina Turner; and

WHEREAS, in 1983, Judge Peyton successfully won the primary election for justice court judge of the southern district of Yazoo County, and became the first black justice court judge in Yazoo County—he was reelected to four subsequent terms in 1987, 1991, 1995, and 1999; and

WHEREAS, Judge Peyton was a member of the Mt. Vernon M.B. Church, where he served as a trustee, an usher, and deacon—he also served as a member of the Public Service Commission board of directors, the 21 Club, the Yazoo Development Corp, the State Embalming Board after being appointed by Gov. William Winter, the G.A. Carmichael Family Health Center board, the Yazoo County Fair and Civic League, the Delta Seasonal Farm Workers, and Widow’s Lodge #16 A.F. & A.M.; and

WHEREAS, Judge Peyton passed away on Friday, August 9, 2002, at age 78 due to a heart attack—he is survived by his wife, Myra B. Peyton of Yazoo City, seven children, two brothers, a sister, 13 grandchildren, three great-grandchildren and a host of friends and colleagues; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Ronnie Musgrove, Governor of the State of Mississippi, hereby proclaim August 16, 2002, as

JUDGE A. J. PEYTON DAY

in the State of Mississippi.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Mississippi to be affixed.

DONE in the City of Jackson, August 16, 2002, in the two hundred and twenty-sixth year of the United States of America.

RONNIE MUSGROVE
GOVERNOR