

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 415

Honoring the life and recognizing the accomplishments of William Karnet “Bill” Willis, pioneer and Hall of Fame football player for both Ohio State University and the Cleveland Browns.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 19 (legislative day, DECEMBER 18), 2007

Mr. BROWN (for himself, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. COCHRAN, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. ENZI, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. SCHUMER, and Mr. LAUTENBERG) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Honoring the life and recognizing the accomplishments of William Karnet “Bill” Willis, pioneer and Hall of Fame football player for both Ohio State University and the Cleveland Browns.

Whereas William Karnet Willis (“Bill”) was born on October 5, 1921, in Columbus, Ohio;

Whereas, in 1942, Bill Willis began playing college football for the Ohio State University’s Buckeyes and was a member of the 1942 National Championship team;

Whereas Bill Willis earned All-American honors at the Ohio State University in 1943 and 1944, becoming the first African-American All-American at the Ohio State University;

Whereas Bill Willis was twice chosen to play in the College All-Star Game, in 1944 and in 1945;

Whereas, on August 7, 1946, Bill Willis was the first of a pioneering foursome to sign a contract to play professional football for the Cleveland Browns, forever ending the race barrier in professional football;

Whereas Bill Willis was named 3 times an All-America Football Conference all-league player, named 4 times a National Football League all-league player, and was named to the first 3 Pro Bowls;

Whereas, in 1950, Bill Willis was a member of the National Football League champion Cleveland Browns and was named the team's Most Valuable Player;

Whereas, in 1971, Bill Willis was inducted into the National Football Foundation's College Football Hall of Fame;

Whereas, in 1977, Bill Willis was inducted to the Pro Football Hall of Fame;

Whereas Bill Willis was synonymous with his number 99 jersey in the Ohio State University community, and that number was retired on November 3, 2007;

Whereas Bill Willis dedicated his life to helping others and served his community honorably on the Ohio Youth Commission;

Whereas Bill Willis was a beloved community leader, husband, and father; and

Whereas Ohio has lost a beloved son and a trailblazing pioneer with the passing of Bill Willis on November 27, 2007: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

1 (1) honors the life and accomplishments of Wil-
2 liam Karnet “Bill” Willis, a dedicated family man,
3 civil servant, and football legend; and

4 (2) respectfully requests the Secretary of the
5 Senate to transmit an enrolled copy of this resolu-
6 tion for appropriate display to the family of Bill Wil-
7 lis.

○