

SR-75, As Adopted by Senate, June 21, 2007

Senator Hunter offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 75.

A resolution honoring Norman "Turkey" Stearnes.

Whereas, Baseball's great common denominator resides in the statistics that surround and define achievement; and

Whereas, Norman "Turkey" Stearnes' lifetime batting average of .364, career slugging percentage of .654, batting average of .474 in playoff games, coupled with his record of leading the league in doubles twice, triples three times, and home runs seven times renders more than ample documentation for entry into the Michigan Sports Hall of Fame; and

Whereas, Turkey Stearnes garnered more votes (59,904) than any other player when fans selected participants for the first Negro League All-Star Game in 1933; and

Whereas, Had Turkey Stearnes put up those incredible numbers in the major leagues, not the old Negro Leagues, he would surely rest comfortably among other Michigan Sports Hall of Fame inductees who currently form the roster of Michigan's most prestigious sports club; and

Whereas, According to available scoresheets, in games played against their white major league counterparts, Negro League teams won 60 percent of the time, prompting the great Harry Salsinger, chronicler of sports for *The Detroit News*, to write, "The level of the game in the Negro League is easily on par with that being played at Navin Field"; and

Whereas, In his twenty years in professional baseball, Turkey Stearnes not only compiled Hall of Fame statistics, but also demonstrated a rare love of America's pastime, earning the name "Turkey" from the way he flapped his arms while he ran the bases with the speed and grace of a giant cat; and

Whereas, Such greats of the game as James "Cool Papa" Bell--"If they don't put Turkey in, they shouldn't put anybody in"--and Leroy "Satchel" Paige--"Turkey was one of the greatest hitters we ever had. He was as good as Josh Gibson. He was as good as anybody who ever played baseball"--readily offered their accolades to Turkey Stearnes; and

Whereas, Turkey Stearnes stands as an outstanding role model for all athletes of any league and any sport. When asked about the number of home runs he had, Turkey responded, "I never counted my home runs unless they won games"; and

Whereas, Turkey Stearnes refused to bear false witness when asked on a questionnaire from Cooperstown, "What do you consider your outstanding achievement in baseball?" He responded simply and directly, "Hitting, fielding, running and throwing"; and

Whereas, After spending nine of his twenty years in baseball with the Detroit Stars, Turkey Stearnes did retire from the game in 1946 and took for his wife the beautiful Nettie Mae McArthur and chose to call Detroit his permanent home, where their children, Rosilyn and Joyce, and grandchildren became their greatest joys in life; and

Whereas, In 2000, Turkey Stearnes was recognized in Cooperstown for his outstanding service to baseball by being inducted into the Major League Hall of Fame; and

Whereas, After his retirement from baseball, Turkey Stearnes, while working in the foundry at the River Rouge Plant, rarely missed a Detroit Tigers game, preferring to sit in the bleachers "with those who knew and loved the game"; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That the Michigan Senate, representing all the citizens of the great state of Michigan, go on record urging the Michigan Sports Hall of Fame to follow the lead of the Major League Hall of Fame in Cooperstown and cast their vote in favor of Norman "Turkey" Stearnes' entry into the Michigan Sports Hall of Fame; and be it further

Resolved, That this action be taken not to salve the collective guilt that stems from a sorry page in our nation's history, but because of this body's firm belief that Turkey Stearnes rightfully belongs in the Michigan Sports Hall of Fame based on his outstanding and measurable achievements on the playing field; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to his daughters, Rosilyn and Joyce, and to the Michigan Sports Hall of Fame.