

SR-76, As Adopted by Senate, June 21, 2007

Senator Clark-Coleman offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 76.

A resolution honoring Louis Gossett, Jr., for his unyielding contributions to American arts and culture.

Whereas, Louis Gossett, Jr., began his acting career in 1953 at the age of 17, when he appeared in "Take a Giant Step," and subsequently earned the Donaldson Award for that year's best newcomer. Lou, as he is known by his legion of fans, later played in the theatrical production of "A Raisin in the Sun," a role that he reprised on film in 1961; and

Whereas, Lou is a well-regarded thespian most well-known for feature films in which he set the standard for African American leading men. His breakthrough role came about at a pivotal time in American history, where this country grappled with the civil rights victories of the '60s and the social upheaval of the '70s. His role as Fiddler in Alex Haley's superior TV miniseries "Roots" remains the bellwether for supporting roles in historical television movies; and

Whereas, Stretching himself wider than the silver screen and lending his voice to the cause of social justice, Lou has remained active in assuring that all Americans are afforded equal opportunity. He serves as a role model in Hollywood to African American actors and actresses who strive to portray roles that reflect the true experiences of Americans; and

Whereas, His career is a reflection of his ability to speak to the experiences of American citizens, regardless of race. He has earned awards for various roles that looked outside of stereotypical strongholds. In 1977, he earned a Best Supporting Actor Oscar for playing a deceptively rigid drill sergeant in "An Officer and A Gentleman." That same year, he also starred in another television series as the wise mentor to an alien prince in "The Powers of Matthew Star"; and

Whereas, Lou's portrayals are unbounded. He has worked on comedies such as "The Landlord" (1970), "The Skin Game" (1971) with James Garner, "Travels With My Aunt" (1972), and the film adaptation of the Tony Award-winning drama, "The River Niger" (1975). His riveting performance as a cut-throat character stalking Nick Nolte and Jacqueline Bisset in "The Deep" (1977) signaled the beginning of his rising star; and

Whereas, Lou's nuanced performances lent credibility to socially-themed projects, and his career has charted the social growth of the United States. His latest movie, "Daddy's Little Girls" (2006) shows the efforts of a single father to gain custody of his three daughters while gaining control of his own life. In his supporting role, Lou's character offers the wisdom that only a seasoned gentleman can provide. His role in the film reflects the man that Lou is in real life. Organizations such as the NAACP, CARE, and the United States Armed Forces have honored him for his contributions to others; and

Whereas, Louis Gossett, Jr., is a national treasure and has offered his talents and gifts to the American public for the past 54 years; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we recognize him for not only entertaining us, but for teaching America about the greatness that lies within each citizen; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to Louis Gossett, Jr., on Saturday, June 23, 2007, at a reception honoring him at Campus Martius in Detroit, Michigan.