**South Carolina General Assembly**

126th Session, 2025-2026

**H. 3992**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

House Resolution

Sponsors: Reps. Reese, Rivers, Alexander, Anderson, Atkinson, Bailey, Ballentine, Bamberg, Bannister, Bauer, Beach, Bernstein, Bowers, Bradley, Brewer, Brittain, Burns, Bustos, Calhoon, Caskey, Chapman, Chumley, Clyburn, Cobb-Hunter, Collins, B.J. Cox, B.L. Cox, Crawford, Cromer, Davis, Dillard, Duncan, Edgerton, Erickson, Forrest, Frank, Gagnon, Garvin, Gatch, Gibson, Gilliam, Gilliard, Gilreath, Govan, Grant, Guest, Guffey, Haddon, Hager, Hardee, Harris, Hart, Hartnett, Hartz, Hayes, Henderson-Myers, Herbkersman, Hewitt, Hiott, Hixon, Holman, Hosey, Howard, Huff, J.E. Johnson, J.L. Johnson, Jones, Jordan, Kilmartin, King, Kirby, Landing, Lawson, Ligon, Long, Lowe, Luck, Magnuson, Martin, May, McCabe, McCravy, McDaniel, McGinnis, Mitchell, Montgomery, J. Moore, T. Moore, Morgan, Moss, Murphy, Neese, B. Newton, W. Newton, Oremus, Pace, Pedalino, Pope, Rankin, Robbins, Rose, Rutherford, Sanders, Schuessler, Sessions, G.M. Smith, M.M. Smith, Spann-Wilder, Stavrinakis, Taylor, Teeple, Terribile, Vaughan, Weeks, Wetmore, White, Whitmire, Wickensimer, Williams, Willis, Wooten and Yow

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Introduced in the House on February 13, 2025

Adopted by the House on February 13, 2025

Summary: Sarah Mae Flemming, Black History Month honoree

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

Date Body Action Description with journal page number

2/13/2025 House Introduced and adopted ([House Journal‑page 37](h:\hj\20250213.docx))

View the latest  [legislative information](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/billsearch.php?billnumbers=3992&session=126&summary=B)  at the website

**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[02/13/2025](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/3992_20250213.docx)

A house RESOLUTION

TO HONOR THE LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF PROMINENT AFRICAN AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST SARAH MAE FLEMMING BROWN, A NATIVE OF EASTOVER.

Whereas, civil rights activist Sarah Mae Flemming was born in Eastover to Mack and Rosetta Flemming. At the age of 20, she worked as a housekeeper in nearby Columbia. On June 22, 1954, Flemming boarded a bus run by the South Carolina Electric and Gas Company (SCE&G) at the corner of Main and Taylor streets in Columbia. The bus was crowded that day, with few seats available. Soon after she boarded, a white rider got up and exited the bus, and Flemming sat down in the vacated seat. The driver saw her sit down and verbally abused her, yelling at her to get up. Embarrassed, Flemming signaled to get off the bus. At the next stop, she attempted to follow two white women off the front of the bus, but before she could get off, the driver struck her in the abdomen and forced her to exit from the back of the bus; and

Whereas, with the assistance of South Carolina state NAACP secretary Modjeska Simkins, Flemming secured the representation of attorney Philip Wittenberg and sued SCE&G in federal district court for $25,000 in actual and punitive damages. An avowed segregationist, Judge George Bell Timmerman dismissed the case. In 1955, Flemming appealed to the U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, which ruled that the principles in the recently decided *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, which ruled segregation in public schools unconstitutional, were also applicable to intrastate transportation. SCE&G appealed to the Supreme Court, which declined to hear the case, and it again came before Judge Timmerman in district court in 1956. Timmerman dismissed the case a second time, and Flemming appealed again to the appellate court, which again remanded it back to district court for trial. The NAACP Legal Defense Fund assisted with the appeals, and attorneys Lincoln Jenkins and Matthew Perry represented Flemming at trial. Finally in June 1957, Flemming had her case heard in court. Despite her description of the incident in her testimony, corroborated by witnesses, an all-white, all‑male jury decided in favor of the bus company after only thirty minutes of deliberation; and

Whereas, although Flemming lost at trial, her case had a significant effect on desegregation of buses and civil rights law across the country. Her incident occurred seventeen months before the famous Rosa Parks case that sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Attorneys in *Browder v. Gayle*, the lawsuit that ultimately ended the Montgomery Bus Boycott, cited the Fourth Circuit’s decision in her case, *Flemming v. SCE&G*, as precedent. Flemming gave few public interviews about her experiences, but in 1956 she praised the Supreme Court for denying SCE&G’s appeal and said, “As for myself, I never rode a city bus since they put me off, and I never will again”; and

Whereas, Sarah Mae Flemming was married to John Brown and was the mother of three children. She passed away on June 16, 1993, and was buried at Goodwill Baptist Church in Eastover, but her heroic act and determination lived on as a powerful example for individuals such as Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr. as they continued the quest for justice and equality. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, honor the life and achievements of prominent African American civil rights activist Sarah Mae Flemming Brown, a native of Eastover.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Sarah Mae Flemming Brown.

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