

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA**  
**SESSION 2005**  
**RATIFIED BILL**

**RESOLUTION 2005-40**  
**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 198**

A JOINT RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF MILTON F. FITCH, SR., AND CORA WHITTED FITCH, DISTINGUISHED CITIZENS AND CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS.

Whereas, Milton F. Fitch, Sr., of New Haven, Connecticut, and Cora Jordan Whitted of Wilson, North Carolina, were married in 1941; and

Whereas, Milton Fitch served nearly five years in the United States Army, earning several medals and three battle stars and distinguishing himself during World War II by contributing to the success of the Red Ball Express, a massive convoy system that delivered supplies to the Allied troops at the war front in Europe; and

Whereas, after the war, Milton and Cora Fitch settled in the City of Wilson where he became a postal worker and she became a schoolteacher; and

Whereas, Milton and Cora Fitch were married for 47 years and were the loving parents of five children; and

Whereas, Milton and Cora Fitch stressed the importance of education in their household and were proud that Jerome and Christine earned doctorate degrees, Milton, Jr., and Patricia received law degrees, and Ernestine obtained a medical degree; and

Whereas, Milton and Cora Fitch became strong advocates for civil rights and frequently took action without regard to their own personal safety to improve the unjust and inequitable conditions faced by African-Americans in their community; and

Whereas, Milton Fitch won a lawsuit against the federal government to become the first African-American letter carrier in the City of Wilson since Reconstruction and helped to initiate a lawsuit against Wilson County over the county's voting patterns, a case that was argued before the United States Supreme Court and led to the county's adoption of a ward system of representation; and

Whereas, Milton Fitch was instrumental in securing burial space for poor veterans in the Rest Haven Cemetery and played a key role convincing the Wilson County government to remove a plaque on the courthouse that listed the county's World War II dead by race; and

Whereas, Cora Fitch organized the first African-American Girl Scout troop in Wilson and was elected to the Wilson County Board of County Commissioners in 1986; and

Whereas, Milton and Cora Fitch also made significant contributions to their community through their involvement in numerous social, fraternal, and civic organizations; and

Whereas, Milton Fitch served as the North Carolina Coordinator for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, a role which caused him to participate in activities throughout the South, was active in the NAACP, and worked on the campaigns of candidates seeking national and statewide offices; and

Whereas, Milton Fitch was a 33<sup>rd</sup> degree Mason and on October 7, 1995, was elected Most Worshipful Grand Master of the Prince Hall Masons, Jurisdiction of North Carolina, an honor bestowed upon him for his many years of commitment and dedication to the Masons; and

Whereas, Milton Fitch held a number of other positions as a Mason and was associated with many lodges, including Mizpah Temple #66 and C.A. Whitehead Consistory #188; and

Whereas, Cora Fitch served on the boards of the Wilson County Department of Social Services and the Wilson County Library and was a founding member of the Wilson Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., an organization that boasts more than 200,000 members across the country and more than 150 chapters in the South Atlantic Region; and

Whereas, Cora Fitch was active in the Jackson Chapel First Baptist Church, serving as Minister of Music and Youth Choir Director; and

Whereas, Milton and Cora Fitch were especially proud that their son, Milton F. 'Toby' Fitch, Jr., served approximately 19 years in the North Carolina House of Representatives and was a majority leader, and their daughter, Dr. Christine Fitch, serves on the Wilson County Board of Education and has done so for a number of years; and

Whereas, Cora Fitch died on August 7, 1987, and Milton Fitch died on November 2, 1995; Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

**SECTION 1.** The General Assembly expresses its deep appreciation for the lives, accomplishments, and courage of Milton F. Fitch, Sr., and Cora Whitted Fitch, and for the service they rendered to the citizens in their community, the State of North Carolina, and the nation.

**SECTION 2.** The Secretary of State shall transmit a certified copy of this resolution to the family of Milton F. Fitch, Sr., and Cora Whitted Fitch.

**SECTION 3.** This resolution is effective upon ratification.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 12<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2005.

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Beverly E. Perdue  
President of the Senate

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James B. Black  
Speaker of the House of Representatives