

2022 -- H 8265

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

HOUSE RESOLUTION

EXTENDING DEEPEST CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF JAMES ORRIS
BARNHILL

Introduced By: Representatives Blazejewski, Chippendale, Tanzi, Ajello, Shallcross
Smith, McGaw, Fogarty, Cortvriend, C Lima, and Donovan

Date Introduced: May 18, 2022

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, It is with deepest sympathy that this House has learned of the passing of
2 Professor James Orris Barnhill, a well-respected and admired Professor of Theater Arts at Brown
3 University for many years, and a longtime resident of the City of Providence; and

4 WHEREAS, Born in Sumner, Mississippi, Jim Barnhill was a son of the late Reverend
5 James and Louise Barnhill, and the brother of the late Joseph Barnhill. He served our country
6 with honor in the United State Navy in the Pacific Theatre during World War II as the Executive
7 Officer of a landing craft participating in the Okinawa campaign and in the Occupation of Japan;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, Mr. Barnhill attended Mississippi College, earned his Bachelor's degree
10 from Yale University, his Master's degree from New York University, and a Master's of Fine
11 Arts from the Yale School of Drama; and

12 WHEREAS, Beginning his career in education, Professor Barnhill joined the faculty at
13 Dubuque University in Iowa in 1953, and in 1954, became an Instructor at Brown University. In
14 1958, he became an Assistant Professor of English, and in 1975, became a full Professor at
15 Brown. Professor Barnhill also taught at Tougaloo College in Jackson, Mississippi, was a
16 Fulbright Professor of English at Calicut University, Baroda, Gujarat, India, taught at RI School
17 of Design, and at the University of the Punjab in Lahore, Pakistan; and

18 WHEREAS, In 1978, to the good fortune of many aspiring theatre majors at Brown,
19 Professor Barnhill was appointed Professor of Theater Arts, and was one of the founding

1 members of Brown's Theatre, Speech, and Dance Department, and served as its first Chairperson.
2 His inspiration and dedication to his students began many successful careers including, James
3 Naughton, Kate Burton, Aunjanue Ellis, Jobeth Williams, Laura Linney, John Lee Beatty,
4 Richard Foreman, to name but a few. He also helped to found the Rites and Reason Theatre of the
5 Africana Studies Department, and was active with the Department of Theatre Arts after his
6 retirement in 1987, when he was named Professor Emeritus, Theatre Arts & Performance Studies;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, Expanding Theatre and the Arts in the City of Providence, Mr. Barnhill was
9 a co-founder of Trinity Square Repertory Theatre, where he worked with the company for three
10 seasons, serving in myriad positions. He had also directed over 200 plays, and started a cabaret
11 with Visiting Professor Szymon Bojko and Agnieszka Taborska from Poland at RISD; and

12 WHEREAS, Professor Jim Barnhill devoted much of his life to advancement of Theater
13 Arts, his students, Brown University, and the enrichment of all our lives and he will be truly
14 missed; now, therefore be it

15 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby
16 extends deepest condolences on the passing of James Orris Barnhill; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
18 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Janet Blume, Deputy Dean of the Faculty,
19 Interim Chair of Theatre Arts & Performance Studies, Brown University.

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