



The Trustees of the
Official South Carolina Hall of Fame
cordially invite you to attend the
2012 induction ceremony of

Attorney, Legislator, Jurist
Judge Ernest A. Finney, Jr.

&

Colonial Representative & Delegate to the Continental Congress

Thomas Lynch, Sr.

Monday, February 13, 2012
10:30 a.m.

Myrtle Beach Convention Center
Ballrooms A, B, C, D & E
2101 North Oak Street
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

The event is free and open to the public

Inductee biographies located on back



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Judge Ernest A. Finney, Jr.

Ernest A. Finney, Jr., born March 23, 1931, was the first African-American Supreme Court Justice appointed to the South Carolina Supreme Court since the Reconstruction Era. He currently resides in Sumter, South Carolina. He is a member of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity. Finney was born in Smithfield, Virginia. His mother died when he was ten days old, so he was raised by his father, Dr. Ernest A. Finney, Sr. Finney earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Claflin College in 1952. He then enrolled in South Carolina State College's School of Law, from which he graduated in 1954. In the beginning, he was unable to find work as a lawyer, so he followed in his father's footsteps and worked as a teacher. In 1960, he moved to Sumter and began a full-time law practice.

In 1961, Finney represented the Friendship 9, a group of black junior college students arrested and charged when trying to desegregate McCrory's lunch counter in Rock Hill, South Carolina. In 1963, he served as chairman of the South Carolina Commission on Civil Rights. Finney was elected to the South Carolina House of Representatives in 1972. He was subsequently appointed a member of the House Judiciary Committee, making him the first African-American to serve on that key committee in modern times. Finney was one of the founders of the Legislative Black Caucus and served as charter Chairperson from 1973 to 1975. Among Finney's other accomplishments are also a position on the National College of State Trial Judges, 1977; Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree, The Citadel & Johnson C. Smith University, 1995; Doctor of Humane Letters, SC State University, 1996; Doctor of Laws, Morris College, 1996; Doctorate, Claflin University; Honoree, S.C. Trial Lawyers Association, 1993; elected and qualified Judge of the Third Judicial Circuit, 1976; and elected and qualified Associate Justice, 1985.

In May 1994, the state's general assembly elected Ernest Finney to the position of Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court, effective December 1994, making him the first African-American Chief Justice of South Carolina since Reconstruction. In 1976, he won an election to become South Carolina's first black circuit judge. He has been on the state Supreme Court since 1985. Finney retired from the state Supreme Court in 2000 and was named interim president of South Carolina State University in 2002.

Thomas Lynch, Sr.

Thomas Lynch, Sr. was admired by the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence more than anyone else. The mark of their high regard for him is enshrined by the blank space they created solely for his signature. All 56 signers held him in such high esteem he is the only founding father whose son was elected to replace his father. The reason for their high regard for him was based upon the role he played in events that occurred between 1751 and 1776. Thomas Lynch was recognized by South Carolina by his election to the Commons House of Assembly in 1751 and through his dedication to the Colonies was chosen by his work with George Washington and the Continental Army.

He was one of the most successful indigo and rice planters in the Colony; as a result, he became the second wealthiest individual in the Colony. Mr. Lynch was the leading statesman in the Colony between 1751 and 1776. By his commitment to Independence, Mr. Lynch sacrificed his own fortune. Thomas Lynch Sr. had the respect of the Second Continental Congress to influence the appointment of George Washington as the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army. Washington was not the first choice of many; however, Lynch convinced the New England delegation through John Adams and then convinced the Southern delegation and thus the career of Washington began.

Mr. Lynch's achievements upon the world stage between 1751 and 1776 were as a leader in the Stamp Act Congress, the 1st and 2nd Continental Congresses, and as a representative of the Congress to George Washington in 1776. The reputation of George Washington has stood, and will stand, the test of time. Had it not been for Mr. Lynch, Washington may have never risen to prominence. The premature death of Mr. Lynch's son in 1779 left no heir to preserve his legacy. Now it should be preserved by membership in the South Carolina Hall of Fame. Thomas Lynch was invaluable to the Independence of America. He spearheaded the idea that the Legislative Branch of Congress should consist of two houses, one to represent the area and one to represent population. Where there was a movement to dissolve the Continental Army, it was he, Benjamin Franklin and Colonel Benjamin Harrison who met successfully with Washington saving the Army and Washington.

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