

2015 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 50

BY REPRESENTATIVE JAMES

A RESOLUTION

To express the condolences of the House of Representatives upon the death of the Reverend
Doctor Gardner Calvin Taylor.

WHEREAS, the Lord God Almighty reassigned a spiritual general in His Army, the Reverend Doctor Gardner Calvin Taylor, from Earth to eternal rest, fittingly on Resurrection Sunday, April 5, 2015, at the age of ninety-six; and

WHEREAS, born to Washington Monroe Taylor and Selina Taylor in Baton Rouge on June 18, 1918, Gardner C. Taylor was baptized into the fellowship of Mount Zion First Baptist Church, pastored by his father, and where he also served as pastor from 1943-1947; and

WHEREAS, a 1937 Leland College graduate, Gardner C. Taylor was granted a bachelor of divinity degree at the Oberlin School of Theology and was awarded fifteen honorary doctorate degrees throughout his ministry; in 1948, Dr. Taylor was called to pastor The Concord Baptist Church of Christ in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York, where he served the eight thousand member congregation, now numbering ten thousand members, for forty-two years until his retirement in 1990; and

WHEREAS, under his leadership, The Concord Baptist Church of Christ established a credit union to provide loans denied to blacks by commercial banks; the church also established a one hundred twenty-one bed nursing home, a center for the elderly, and an elementary school; Dr. Taylor was termed "the dean of black preachers in America" by *Time* magazine in 1980; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Taylor not only espoused the Word of God, he was a mentor and close friend of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and a prominent figure in civil rights in the 1960s; and

WHEREAS, in 1961, Dr. Taylor and Dr. King separated from the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., the nation's largest black Christian denomination, and founded the Progressive National Baptist Convention, which was and continues to be committed to social justice, desegregation, and affirmative action; Dr. Taylor served as its president from 1967 to 1969; and

WHEREAS, although arrested three times during civil rights protests in the 1960s, Dr. Taylor was best known for his quiet, effective activism: he was a director of the Urban League of Greater New York, a member of the New York City Commission on Intergroup Relations, and a leader in the Kings County Democratic organization; and

WHEREAS, his resounding timbre and the wisdom expressed in his sermons earned Dr. Taylor the privilege of lecturing and preaching in South Africa, Zambia, Malawi, Denmark, England, Scotland, Australia, China, and Japan and at universities and churches throughout the United States; he also preached the pre-inaugural sermon for President William Jefferson Clinton in 1993; President Clinton awarded Dr. Taylor the nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, in 2000; and

WHEREAS, more than two thousand of Dr. Taylor's sermons have been archived at the Robert W. Woodruff Library in Atlanta, many of which are included in a collection of his sermons in the tome, *The Words of Gardner Taylor: 50 Years of Timeless Treasures*; and

WHEREAS, the conclusion of the life of Dr. Taylor is aptly described in the holy book upon which he founded his faith, in II Timothy 4:7: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing".

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express deepest condolences to the family, friends, and former congregations of the Reverend Doctor Gardner Calvin Taylor upon his passing; does hereby extend sincerest sympathies to those whose lives were touched and transformed by this man of God, powerful in word and deed; and do hereby offer prayers and hopes for comfort in the knowledge that Dr. Taylor's close, personal relationship with his Savior and Lord brings full truth to John 11:25: "I am the resurrection and the life: the one that believes in me, though dead, shall live again".

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the family of Rev. Dr. Gardner C. Taylor.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES