

2017 Regular Session

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 75

BY SENATOR LONG

COMMENDATIONS. Commends posthumously Rev. Dr. T.J. Jemison Sr. upon his induction into the Louisiana Political Museum and Hall of Fame.

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 To commend posthumously Reverend Dr. T.J. Jemison Sr. upon his induction into the  
3 Louisiana Political Museum and Hall of Fame.

4 WHEREAS, Theodore Judson Jemison was born in 1918 in Selma, Alabama as the  
5 youngest of six children of Henrietta and David Jemison; and

6 WHEREAS, his father was the pastor of the Tabernacle Baptist Church, which Rev.  
7 T.J. Jemison later filled his father's shoes in the ministry; and

8 WHEREAS, Rev. Jemison was known as a visionary and very charismatic man; and

9 WHEREAS, Rev. Jemison was a longtime Louisiana pastor, pioneering civil rights  
10 leader, and founder of one of the nation's most effective faith-based civil rights  
11 organizations, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) along with  
12 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Rev. Ralph Abernathy, and Rev. Fred L. Shuttlesworth; and

13 WHEREAS, Rev. Jemison attended public segregated schools and earned a  
14 bachelor's degree from Alabama State University where he also pledged Alpha Phi Alpha  
15 fraternity and later enrolled in graduate school at New York University; and

16 WHEREAS, he then earned a divinity degree at Virginia Union University in  
17 preparation for the immense ministry that he would share with the city of Baton Rouge, state  
18 of Louisiana, and the world; and

1           WHEREAS, in 1953, while serving as the pastor of Mount Zion First Baptist Church  
2 in Baton Rouge, a post he held for fifty-four years, Rev. Jemison helped to lead the first civil  
3 rights boycott of segregated seating on public buses; and

4           WHEREAS, in 1953 he persuaded the Baton Rouge City Council to abolish a public  
5 transportation rule barring blacks from sitting in the first ten rows of public buses and when  
6 bus drivers went on strike to protest the change, Rev. Jemison led an eight-day boycott  
7 establishing a carpool organization for African Americans who accounted for eighty percent  
8 of the city's bus ridership; and

9           WHEREAS, the dispute ended in a compromise that only the first two rows would  
10 be reserved for whites; and

11           WHEREAS, in 2003, the fiftieth anniversary of the Baton Rouge bus boycott was  
12 honored with three days of events in the city; and

13           WHEREAS, Rev. Jemison was instrumental in the planning of the year-long  
14 Montgomery bus boycott which led to the beginning of the end of separate but equal  
15 accommodations in the South; and

16           WHEREAS, Rev. Jemison served faithfully as the first secretary of SCLC for many  
17 years alongside Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.; and

18           WHEREAS, Rev. Jemison also served as the president of the National Baptist  
19 Convention USA Inc., the largest black religious organization in the United States; and

20           WHEREAS, it had been a nonpolitical organization when Rev. Jemison was elected  
21 president in 1982 but he quickly began staking out firm, liberal positions on race-related  
22 issues, accusing President Ronald Reagan of giving "respectability to racism", supporting  
23 the presidential candidacies of the Rev. Jesse Jackson in 1984 and 1988 and, in 1991,  
24 opposing the Persian Gulf war, which he called "a fight over oil"; and

25           WHEREAS, as president of the National Baptist Convention USA from 1982 to  
26 1994, which he ushered into being the Baptist World Center in Nashville, Tennessee, the  
27 first national headquarters of a predominantly black religious organization in the United  
28 States; and

29           WHEREAS, Rev. Jemison died in Baton Rouge at the age of ninety-five and his  
30 body lay in repose at the Louisiana State Capitol on November 22, 2013, the fiftieth

1 anniversary of the assassination of John F. Kennedy; and

2 WHEREAS, services were conducted on November 23rd by Rene F. Brown,  
3 Jemison's successor pastor at Mt. Zion First Baptist Church in Baton Rouge; and

4 WHEREAS, Lieutenant Governor Jay Dardenne said that despite national  
5 prominence, Jemison's most important role was as shepherd of this flock and his church; and

6 WHEREAS, Attorney General Buddy Caldwell quoted Psalms 37:27: "the steps of  
7 a good man are ordered by the Lord", and likened Jemison's life to the Statue of Liberty: he  
8 "gave us a torch to light the way"; and

9 WHEREAS, United States Representative Cedric Richmond, described himself and  
10 other African-American legislators as "direct beneficiaries of the hard work, commitment,  
11 and courage of Dr. Jemison", and reading a statement of President Barack H. Obama,  
12 Richmond described Jemison as "part of the generation that challenged the conscience of our  
13 nation and moved us toward justice and equality for all".

14 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby  
15 commend posthumously Reverend Dr. T.J. Jemison Sr. for his numerous accomplishments  
16 and upon his induction into the Louisiana Political Museum and Hall of Fame.

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the  
18 family of Reverend Dr. T.J. Jemison Sr.

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The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part  
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Ashley Mitchell Carter.

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DIGEST

SCR 75 Original

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