

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 38

BY SENATOR JACKSON

A RESOLUTION

To express the sincere condolences of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the death of Reverend Dr. Harry Blake, pastor and civil rights leader.

WHEREAS, it is with sincere regret and profound sorrow that the members of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana have learned of the death of Dr. Harry Blake on April 8, 2020, at age eighty-five; and

WHEREAS, he grew up on a plantation in north Caddo Parish and attended a one-room school; his mother had a third grade education and his father, a sharecropper, did not know how to read or write but knew how to read people; and

WHEREAS, while a teenager working at a country store owned by a man named H.L. Whitlow, Dr. Blake came to understand that he was at least as intelligent as many of the farmers who stopped there to buy goods, which inspired him to attend Bishop College in Texas; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the commencement speaker at Blake's graduation ceremony in 1960, invited him to come to Atlanta to be interviewed for a position with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and Reverend King hired him; and

WHEREAS, he became the sixteenth pastor of Mt. Canaan Baptist Church on August 4, 1966, and served for fifty-two years, first as pastor and then as pastor emeritus; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Blake's leadership gave impetus to phenomenal growth and accomplishments with the church, including a new edifice in 1976 and Family Life Center in 1995, with the church now having a culturally diverse membership of more than two thousand; and

WHEREAS, he also served as Interim Pastor of St. Rest Baptist Church in Shreveport; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Blake served as moderator of the Thirteenth District Baptist Association, president of the Louisiana Missionary Baptist State Convention, and vice president of the Southwest Region for the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, over the decades he advocated for equality, justice, and for better education, healthcare, and housing in his community; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Blake survived an assassin's bullet, a police beating, and unjust arrests in Shreveport, Louisiana, in the early 1960s as he fought for black people to gain equal rights and was a go-to person in Shreveport for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. during that era; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Blake built a legacy as a pastor, community leader, civil rights leader, and denominational leader; and

WHEREAS, the death of Reverend Dr. Harry Blake has left a tremendous void in his community and has created a genuine sense of sorrow in the many individuals who mourn the loss of the kind nature and bright mind of this wonderful man whose memory shall forever remain in their minds and hearts.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express sincere and heartfelt condolences upon the death of the Reverend Dr. Harry Blake and does hereby extend posthumous honor and recognition to Reverend Blake for his incomparable legacy which is marked by deep pride and honor.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the family of Reverend Dr. Harry Blake.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE