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## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 243

Offered February 27, 2008

*Celebrating the life of Bishop John Gimenez.*

Patrons—Wagner, Blevins, Miller, Y.B., Quayle and Stolle; Delegates: Bouchard, Cosgrove, Iaquinto, Jones, S.C., Mathieson, Purkey, Suit and Tata

WHEREAS, Bishop John Gimenez, the founder and leader of Rock Church International based in Virginia Beach, died on February 12, 2008; and

WHEREAS, John Gimenez, whose parents were from Puerto Rico, grew up on the mean streets of New York City's Spanish Harlem, was ensnared in the neighborhood's drug culture, and was sent to prison at the age of 16; and

WHEREAS, a former drug addict who became a born-again Christian at the age of 31, John Gimenez made a point of including the down-and-out members of his community—the prostitutes, drug abusers, and petty criminals—in his congregation; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Gimenez and his wife, Pastor Anne Gimenez, came to the Hampton Roads area in 1968 and established Rock Church in a rented space; and

WHEREAS, under the energetic guidance of its leaders, the church grew quickly; within three years of the church's founding a building was built with a main hall that could seat 450 people, which was expanded eventually to seat over 5,000 members; and

WHEREAS, Bishop John Gimenez's Rock Church has long been noted for its multiracial and multicultural congregation; and

WHEREAS, in the 1980s, Bishop Gimenez and his wife began a network of Rock satellite churches around the country, and by 2007, Rock Church International had more than 500 member churches in the United States and in Liberia, the Philippines, Ukraine, and India; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Gimenez was also a skilled organizer and, in partnership with other Christian leaders and denominations, he helped plan mass rallies in Washington, D.C., in 1980, 1988, 1996, and 2004, where Christians could fast and pray for the future of the nation; and

WHEREAS, committed to fulfilling the purposes of God by equipping people from the "cradle to the grave," Bishop Gimenez was a strong promoter of unity and diversity who wanted his church to reflect many different races and cultures; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of Bishop John Gimenez, an exceptional spiritual leader and a fine Virginian; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Bishop John Gimenez as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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