

2017 SESSION

ENROLLED

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 252

Commending First Baptist Church of Franklin.

Agreed to by the Senate, January 12, 2017
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 20, 2017

WHEREAS, First Baptist Church of Franklin, a faith community established by freedmen with a trust in God and a vision, and the oldest organization of continuous existence in Franklin, celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2016; and

WHEREAS, First Baptist Church was founded by freed slaves Joseph Gregory and Israel Cross as Cool Spring Baptist Church in 1866, just after the end of slavery; and

WHEREAS, the original structure stood near the banks of the Blackwater River, near present day Bowers Road; it was a brush shelter with a dirt floor, where logs were used for pews and the pulpit was a large block of wood; and

WHEREAS, in 1908, under the leadership of then-pastor Dr. Walter Raleigh Ashburn, the congregation bought two parcels of land between Hall and Pearl streets and began building a new church; and

WHEREAS, the first worship service in the present-day church was held in the basement in December 1908; the name was changed to First Baptist Church roughly 20 years later, during the tenure of then-pastor Dr. M.C. Allen; and

WHEREAS, over its 150-year history, First Baptist Church has demonstrated a commitment to education, expansion of ministries, and community outreach, gaining local and statewide recognition for its efforts; and

WHEREAS, since 2006, First Baptist Church has been led by senior pastor Reverend Dwight Shawrod Riddick and his wife, Reverend Jennell Whitfield Riddick, director of ministries, who have a vision for building on the church's legacy of transforming lives and making a lasting difference in the Franklin community; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend First Baptist Church of Franklin on celebrating 150 years of history as the oldest organization of continuous existence in Franklin; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Reverend Dwight Shawrod Riddick, senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Franklin, as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the church's proud history and continuing legacy.

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