

2018 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 54

Celebrating the life of Bishop Clarence Vernie Russell, Sr.

Agreed to by the House, February 9, 2018

WHEREAS, Bishop Clarence Vernie Russell, Sr., a devoted husband and father who provided spiritual leadership to generations of worshippers at Union Baptist Missionary Church in Suffolk, died on July 8, 2017; and

WHEREAS, born in 1933 in Princess Anne County, Bishop Russell attended Princess Anne County Training School and received his bachelor's degree from Norfolk State University; after serving in the United States Army, he worked as an equal opportunity employment officer before answering the call to become a preacher and earning his divinity degree; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Russell's first post as a pastor was at his home church, New Light Full Gospel Baptist Church; he then took over as leader of Suffolk's Union Baptist Missionary Church, where he served for more than five decades; and

WHEREAS, under Bishop Russell's capable leadership, Union Baptist Missionary Church evolved and grew as a spiritual community; he oversaw the introduction of the church's missionary society, junior usher board, and youth assembly and spearheaded efforts to work with local charities to fight homelessness and hunger; and

WHEREAS, between 2008 and 2010, Bishop Russell also guided the Union Baptist Missionary Church family through a move to a newer, larger building on Nansemond Parkway; and

WHEREAS, known for his heartfelt and captivating sermons, Bishop Russell was a service-oriented member of the community who often visited the sick and elderly, distributed food to the needy, and encouraged his church members to pursue their education; and

WHEREAS, when Bishop Russell retired after over 50 years of nurturing and guiding the members of the Union Baptist Missionary Church, his son, Bishop Clarence Vernie Russell, Jr., took his place as the congregation's pastor; and

WHEREAS, predeceased by his first wife, Leonia, Bishop Russell will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife, Gladys; his children, Clarence Jr., Forrest, Leonia, Naomi, Torrence, Maurice, David, Julia, and Angela, and their families; and countless other family members, friends, congregants, and members of the Suffolk community; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Delegates hereby note with great sadness the loss of Bishop Clarence Vernie Russell, Sr., a dedicated spiritual counselor and community leader; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Bishop Clarence Vernie Russell, Sr., as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for his memory.

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