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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 248

Offered February 21, 2022

Celebrating the life of the Reverend Dr. Clifton Whitaker, Jr.

Patron—McQuinn

WHEREAS, the Reverend Dr. Clifton Whitaker, Jr., esteemed pastor emeritus of Grayland Baptist Church in Richmond and a beloved member of the Richmond community, died on September 10, 2021; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from Armstrong High School in Richmond, Clifton Whitaker studied at Virginia Union University before joining the Richmond Police Department (RPD), where he became the first African American officer to be promoted to the detective division; and

WHEREAS, after 17 years and several awards for his exceptional service, Clifton Whitaker left the RPD and returned to Virginia Union University to complete a bachelor's degree in English; and

WHEREAS, Clifton Whitaker subsequently earned a master of divinity degree and a doctor of divinity degree from the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University and later received a doctor of humane letters degree from Richmond Virginia Seminary; and

WHEREAS, Clifton Whitaker became the pastor at Grayland Baptist Church in 1982 and led the congregation through a period of exceptional growth and outreach in the community before retiring in 2015 and assuming the title of pastor emeritus; and

WHEREAS, Clifton Whitaker's dedication and leadership guided Grayland Baptist Church through various ventures, including the construction of a new sanctuary and fellowship hall and the establishment of a community outreach program that helped feed individuals and families in need; and

WHEREAS, Clifton Whitaker gave generously of his time to myriad religious and civic organizations over the years, including serving as president of both the National Christian Education Convention and the Division of Clergy of the Baptist General Convention of Virginia and as dean of academics at Richmond Virginia Seminary; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his admirable service to the community, Clifton Whitaker received a plethora of awards in his lifetime, including multiple Minister of the Year honors from the Ushers Union of Richmond and Vicinity and a "Living Legend" distinction from Grayland Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, Clifton Whitaker will be fondly remembered and dearly missed by his loving wife of 58 years, Dolores; his children, Gina, Jacquelin, Joy, and Terry, and their families; and numerous other family members and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of the Reverend Dr. Clifton Whitaker, Jr., pastor emeritus of Grayland Baptist Church, whose inspired spiritual guidance and commitment to helping others shaped countless lives; 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 the Reverend Dr. Clifton Whitaker, Jr., as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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