

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 376

Celebrating the life of the Reverend Canon Dr. Joseph N. Green, Jr.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 21, 2023

WHEREAS, the Reverend Canon Dr. Joseph N. Green, Jr., a highly admired spiritual leader and community leader in Norfolk, died on January 14, 2023; and

WHEREAS, during World War II, Father Green served the nation as a United States Navy hospital corpsman; in 1949, he graduated from St. Augustine's College, now St. Augustine's University, where he majored in English, history, and literature, with an emphasis on Biblical literature; and

WHEREAS, in 1953, Father Green earned a master of divinity degree from the Philadelphia Divinity School, and in 1965, he earned a master of sacred theology degree from the University of the South, where he was one of the first two African Americans to graduate from the University of the South's School of Theology; and

WHEREAS, Father Green served the Episcopal Church for 70 years, leaving a lasting influence on many generations of congregants; he served as interim priest, rector, and supply at nine parishes; and

WHEREAS, in 1953, Father Green was ordained as a deacon at St. Barnabas Episcopal Church in Jenkinsville, South Carolina; then in 1954, he was ordained as a priest and spent two years at St. Barnabas before moving on to two other churches in South Carolina, the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany in Spartanburg and St. Philip's Episcopal Church in Greenville; and

WHEREAS, Father Green was appointed as chaplain at Saint Augustine's College in 1958, and he was a mentor to many young people who wanted to be priests; and

WHEREAS, Father Green served as the Union of Black Episcopalians' sixth national president from 1975 to 1978, and he established the James Solomon Russell Chapter of the organization in Hampton Roads, where he was a life member; and

WHEREAS, for 30 years, Father Green served as rector of Grace Episcopal Church in Norfolk, where he oversaw one of the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia's most active congregations; after retirement, he continued to serve at Trinity in South Hill, St. Mark's in Suffolk, and St. James in Portsmouth; and

WHEREAS, Father Green was appointed canon theologian for the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia in 2021 by the Bishop Susan B. Haynes; he worked at Norfolk's Christ & St. Luke's Episcopal Church in that capacity; and

WHEREAS, after serving on the Norfolk School Board, Father Green was elected to the Norfolk City Council, where he served for 20 years, including 10 years as vice mayor; as a civil rights activist and a champion of justice and equal rights, he played a pivotal role in shaping a transformative moment in the city's history and was in charge of preserving Church Street Historic District; and

WHEREAS, Father Green's initiatives to promote affordable and accessible housing and education have permanently enhanced the city; he was a strong supporter of mass transit, advocated for the inclusion of a public housing tenant on the Housing Commission, and was influential in the development of Tidewater Community College's downtown campus; Tidewater Community College's administrative building bears his name in recognition of his accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, Father Green's photograph sits in the lobby of University of the South's School of Theology's administration building, a fitting memorial to one of the school's most notable graduates; he received five honorary degrees and other awards and recognitions from colleges, universities, religious institutions, and organizations and served as an emeritus trustee of St. Augustine's University; and

WHEREAS, Father Green enjoyed reading, gardening, fishing, listening to music, and watching sports, especially baseball, basketball and football; he was a member of several professional and social organizations, including Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., Metro Anglers Club, Prince Hall Masons, and Sigma Pi Phi Boule; and

WHEREAS, Father Green is survived by his wife of 67 years, Evelyn Grant Green; children, Angela Green Middleton and Joseph N. Green III; two grandchildren, Charles Middleton IV and Eric Sawyer; one great-grandson, Jalen Sawyer; two brothers, Adolph Green (Joan) and Leon Green (Ann); and a host of other family members and friends who will miss him dearly; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Delegates hereby note with great sadness the loss of the Reverend Canon Dr. Joseph N. Green, Jr.; 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 Canon Dr. Joseph N. Green, Jr., as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for his memory.