

## Senate Resolution 477

By: Senators Anderson of the 43rd, Davenport of the 44th, Jones of the 10th, Rhett of the 33rd, Seay of the 34th and others

## A RESOLUTION

1 Congratulating and commending Saint Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church on its  
2 139th anniversary; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, Saint Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1878, and the  
4 first church structure was built at a sacrifice, as wages and earning power were at a low ebb  
5 for persons of African descent; Mr. L. Bates, a successful blacksmith in the community,  
6 donated the land for the church and the first pastor was the Reverend Andrew Paul Beslaw;  
7 and

8 WHEREAS, around 1900, the church burned down, and many of the first records were lost;  
9 therefore, we rely on memories of those whose parents were pioneers in establishing the  
10 church. After the first loss by fire, these faithful Christians rebuilt the church on the present  
11 site. This time they were able to build a parsonage for the pastor on the original site. Two  
12 years later, fire struck again. Both the church and the parsonage were lost and rebuilt in the  
13 same year. In 1902, Bishop Henry McNeal Turner dedicated the new buildings to the glory  
14 of God; and

15 WHEREAS, from 1902 to 1908, the marble table top, which now stands in the vestibule, was  
16 used for the communion table. It was purchased by the first trustees of record in 1904. They  
17 were Brother W.M. Wright, Williams Robinson, J.W. Smith, W.M. Morris, Lee Leslie, Tom  
18 Nelson, J.M. Marks, T.M. Morris, and N.J. Broughton. During the Depression, Sister  
19 Mahalie Clark purchased and donated the first piano to the church. The church was  
20 connected to General (Connectional) Church in 1912. Joseph Simeon Flipper was Bishop;  
21 and

22 WHEREAS, from 1943 to 1945, the missionary society was revived, and the members were  
23 able to do great works to build up the church and involve the young people in more church  
24 activities. From 1968 to 1976, Sunday school rooms, offices, a kitchen, a fellowship area,  
25 a choir room, a minister's study, and restrooms were added. Pulpit furniture, new pews,

26 carpet, and a new piano were purchased. From 1982 to 1986, the church was renovated and  
27 rededicated, the baptismal font was purchased, and new stained glass windows were  
28 installed; and

29 WHEREAS, from 1988 to 1991, Saint Paul received national television exposure as a  
30 location for the *In The Heat of the Night* television series and the *I'll Fly Away* movie.  
31 During this time, the church became a permanent registration site for Newton County voters.  
32 Under Reverend Augusta H. Hall, Jr., many improvements were made to the church  
33 property: lights were added to the parking lot, church records were computerized, a new  
34 public address system was installed, an organ and drums were added to the music  
35 department, additional property was procured, sidewalks added, and several ministries were  
36 organized, including Sons of Allen, Senior Citizens and Retirees Program, Church Nursery,  
37 Audio Ministry, Male and AH Hall Usher Boards, Male Chorus, Young Adult Ministry,  
38 Women's Ministry, Greeters Ministry, and Couples Ministry; and

39 WHEREAS, under the tutelage of Reverend Thomas R. Stegall, the church is entering a new  
40 phase of growth and is striving toward building a new church in the very near future. The  
41 church is grateful to God who inspired the pioneers to build the first church, for without this  
42 beginning the congregation would not have had anything upon which to build.

43 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body  
44 congratulate Saint Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church on its 139th anniversary,  
45 commend it for its many outstanding contributions on behalf of the citizens of Georgia, and  
46 extend best wishes for its continued growth, development, and success.

47 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed  
48 to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to Saint Paul African  
49 Methodist Episcopal Church.