

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 257

By Weaver

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize Robert Terry Little, Jr.,
for meritorious service to the Methodist Church
and the State of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those citizens who, through their extraordinary efforts, have distinguished themselves as community leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy individual is Robert Terry Little, Jr., a long-time pastor and highly respected member of his community; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Little first felt called to ministry when he was a student at Tennessee Tech; his mentor was Reverend James Reed Cox, and, while serving as president of the Wesley Foundation during his senior year, Mr. Little answered the call to serve in the Methodist Church; and

WHEREAS, in 1959, after he was recommended for a license to preach by First Methodist Church in Cookeville, Terry Little began his introductory studies; during the summer of 1959 he finished his Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics from Tennessee Tech, received his first appointment from the Tennessee Annual Conference of the Methodist Church, and was joined in holy matrimony with his college sweetheart, Rosalyn "Rosie" Owen; and

WHEREAS, fittingly, Mr. Little followed in the footsteps of his grandfather, Gerald Harper, and his uncle, Frank Calhoun, both of whom served the Tennessee Annual Conference of the Methodist Church assiduously for many years; and

WHEREAS, his first appointment at Granville Circuit in Jackson County prepared him for many years of fruitful service in the name of Christ; the people of the Circuit reached out to him

and his new wife with an incredible amount of compassion and love, nurturing them and patiently encouraging them as they grew in their personal faith and in the ministry; and

WHEREAS, in the fall of 1960 Terry Little began his studies at Vanderbilt Divinity School, from which he graduated in the spring of 1963 with a Master of Divinity degree; he was ordained Elder and admitted into full connection by Bishop Roy Short at the June Annual Conference at the Baxter Methodist Church; and

WHEREAS, during the earliest years of their ministry, Mr. and Mrs. Little were blessed with the births of their three sons, Robert Terry III, Standlee Scott, and William Owen; they later became foster parents to twelve other babies and children; and

WHEREAS, in addition to pastoring the Granville Circuit, Terry Little became the pastor of other congregations, including Scottsboro, White Bluff-Burns, Cross Plains, Glenclyff, Smithville First, and Fayetteville First; while serving as Conference Treasurer, Mr. Little also served as interim pastor at Bethany and Pleasant Grove; and

WHEREAS, though shy and retiring by nature, his enthusiastic preaching of the Bible and his love for the people in his congregations enabled Terry Little to help churches grow and fulfill their missions; a gentle soul, he never betrayed a confidence and maintained an excellent rapport with people of all ages; and

WHEREAS, greatly admired and trusted in each community he served, he devoted much of his time to civic and community service; Terry and Rosie Little were recognized for their leadership with the Boy Scouts of America when together they received the distinguished Long Rifle Award from the Black Fox District; and

WHEREAS, in 1984, while they were still serving with the Fayetteville Church, Terry and Rosie Little received a call from the Bishop asking Mr. Little to serve as Director of the Conference Fiscal Pensions Office, now known as Administrative Services; in this capacity, he stood as Conference Treasurer, Statistician, and Overseer of the Conference Pension and Insurance Programs; and

WHEREAS, during this busy time, Mr. Little was especially grateful for the diligent work of his two administrative assistants, Nancy Pearson and Erma Swiney, who were excellent co-workers, putting in long hours and ensuring that everything in the office ran smoothly; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Little's passion for better retirement benefits for the clergy led him to head up the Conference in a Campaign for Pensions, which raised more than \$7 million, resulting in a well-funded pension program for retired Methodist ministers; and

WHEREAS, in response to Terry Little's dedication, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits honored him at their national meeting in 1993, awarding him with the Charles L. Calkins Award for outstanding service in his field; and

WHEREAS, as Conference Treasurer and Director of Administrative Services, Mr. Little worked closely with the various boards and agencies of the Tennessee Conference and spent countless hours traveling around the districts to help clergy and local church officials wisely manage their financial responsibilities; his focus during his twenty years in this office was to always be available for personal assistance to any active or retired minister of the Conference; and

WHEREAS, a leader in the Methodist community, Terry Little has served with acumen and alacrity as Registrar of the Conference Board of the Ministry, Executive Secretary of the Equitable Salary Commission, a member of the Conference Committee on Worship, and as Secretary of the Board of Directors for the Area Foundation; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Little took his much deserved retirement at the Annual Conference in 2004 but remained on the job for six more months to faithfully train his successor; he was surprised and honored when the Conference Journal gave him the Clergy Dedication for 2004; and

WHEREAS, a deeply valued member of the Conference, Terry Little's co-workers commend him, saying that "his deep understanding of spiritual issues has allowed this Conference to make and implement prudent decisions and timely actions. He has worked faithfully with all committees of the Conference and has brought an informed voice to the work of the church"; and

WHEREAS, after forty-five years of ministry in his conference, Mr. Little's first love is still preaching the Gospel, and he rarely turns down an opportunity to do so; and

WHEREAS, he has served as interim pastor for several congregations during his time in the Administrative Office and also in the Cumberland Presbyterian Churches in DeKalb and

White counties; now that he has officially taken his retirement, he and his wife have returned to their very first appointment at Granville, where Mr. Little occasionally preaches, teaches the Adult Sunday School Class, and sings in the choir, as well as at funerals and weddings; and

WHEREAS, Terry Little began his ministry at Granville Circuit fifty years ago, and, although many of the people he knew then are gone now, he still finds the same compassion among the people there and delights in watching the church grow once more; and

WHEREAS, deeply devoted to his family, he is the grandfather of eleven beautiful granddaughters, who are the light of his life; and

WHEREAS, Terry Little is a devout public servant and minister who has given of himself for fifty years to do the work of the Lord, caring for the membership of each congregation with astute wisdom and compassion, and he should be specially praised; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend Robert Terry Little, Jr., for meritorious service to his church and his community and extend to him our best wishes for every future success and happiness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.