

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 529

By Hardaway

A RESOLUTION to honor Fred L. Davis for his historic service to the City of Memphis as one of the first African-American councilmen.

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 person is Fred L. Davis, one of the first African Americans to win election to the Memphis City Council; and

WHEREAS, born in Memphis on May 8, 1934, Mr. Davis graduated from Manassas High School in 1953 and earned his Bachelor of Science degree from Tennessee State University in 1957; and

WHEREAS, after college, Fred Davis joined the United States Army and served his country in France for two years; he then returned to Memphis and began pursuing his master's degree at Memphis State University; and

WHEREAS, in 1967, Mr. Davis opened Fred L. Davis Insurance, one of the first African American-owned insurance agencies in the South; through the years, the business has grown from a small office to a powerhouse of sales, widely respected in the Memphis community; and

WHEREAS, a staunch civil rights activist and defender of democracy for all, Fred Davis, in 1968, won election to the first Memphis City Council from a white majority district; he became the first African American to chair the council in 1972, and his service was judged as steadfast and fair to all residents; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Davis was chairman of the Public Works Committee during the sanitation workers strike of 1968; he was on the platform with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., when

he made his final speech in Memphis that year, and he walked beside Dr. King on the last march he made in support of the striking workers shortly before Dr. King's tragic death; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Davis has dedicated his time and energies to a number of civic organizations; he serves on the board of directors of the Assisi Foundation, as a trustee of the Community Foundation, and as a director of the Memphis Leadership Foundation; he is a past president of the University of Memphis Society; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, he received the Humanitarian of the Year Award from the National Council of Christians and Jews and the Communicator of the Year Award from the Public Relations Society; and

WHEREAS, a devoted family man, Fred Davis enjoys the love and support of his wife, three children, and two grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Davis's outstanding success as a public servant and community leader is directly attributable to his reliance on the time-honored values of hard work and common sense and his uncommon ability to work well with and relate to people from all walks of life; and

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly find it appropriate to pause in their deliberations to acknowledge and applaud Fred Davis for his dedication to the City of Memphis and its citizens; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor Fred L. Davis for his historic service to the City of Memphis as one of the first African American councilmen.

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