

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 637

By Hardaway

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Bernal E. Smith II of Memphis.

WHEREAS, the members of this legislative body were greatly saddened to learn of the untimely passing of Bernal E. Smith II; and

WHEREAS, Bernal E. Smith II was the president and publisher of *The New Tri-State Defender* and a Memphis civic leader who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, a longtime resident of Shelby County, Mr. Smith attended Whitehaven High School, was a graduate of Rhodes College, and held a Master of Business Administration from Union University; and

WHEREAS, a successful businessman, Mr. Smith engineered the purchase of the *Tri-State Defender* by a local ownership group, Best Media Properties, with local investment in 2013; and

WHEREAS, his professional career included tenures as a special assets manager at Bank of Bartlett and as a vice president of the Greater Memphis Chamber; and

WHEREAS, Bernal Smith was also a partner in Olympic Financial Services, Inc., which offers tax preparation, short-term loans, and credit counseling; and

WHEREAS, as a community leader, he was involved in mentoring city youth and spearheaded an annual youth leadership conference targeting young African-American men. He was a founder of Memphis Academy of Health Sciences charter school and the past president of the 100 Black Men of Memphis, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Smith was a board member of the Memphis Urban League, the Memphis Blues Society, the Memphis Academy of Health Sciences, and the Whitehaven Leadership Council; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, Bernal Smith was honored for his community service by a number of organizations, including Mpact Memphis, The Top Ladies of Distinction, Phi Beta Sigma – African American Male Image Award, Kindle Award, and The Coalition of 100 Black Women; and

WHEREAS, Bernal Smith leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this legislative body should remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; 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 honor the memory of Bernal E. Smith II, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mr. Smith.

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