

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 849

By Cooper

A RESOLUTION to recognize Leslie Smith-Thomas, Third Annual Living Legend Awards honoree.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we should specially recognize those estimable individuals who have dedicated their time and energies toward enhancing the quality of life in their communities; and

WHEREAS, one such individual is Leslie Smith-Thomas, who is being honored at the Third Annual Living Legend Awards in recognition of the leadership and service she has provided to the people of Shelby County; and

WHEREAS, the Third Annual Living Legend Awards ceremony, which honors Harriet Tubman and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., will be held at the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis on March 8, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the daughter of Admiral Vinson and Sandra Smith, Leslie Smith-Thomas grew up on and around naval bases, but she traveled every summer to spend time with her grandparents in the hills of Smith County; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Smith-Thomas attended Tennessee Technological University, where she met her husband; the couple later moved to Memphis, and she attended Christian Brothers University; and

WHEREAS, after graduating *summa cum laude*, Leslie Smith-Thomas had a distinguished career as a teacher with Memphis City Schools; she was honored to write the first grade summer school math curriculum and lead workshops for her peers. She was also chosen to be shadowed by visiting foreign school administrators due to her unique reading and writing teaching techniques; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Smith-Thomas chose to stay home with her four daughters and served on the Sea Isle Parent Teacher Organization in a number of positions, including president; she also served as vice president of the White Station High School Athletic Booster Club and a parent representative for the district; and

WHEREAS, it was during this time that she developed Math and Science for Kids (MASK), a program for teaching math and science to preschoolers, and bought her first real estate property with her husband; and

WHEREAS, this first real estate purchase sparked a new passion in Ms. Smith-Thomas, and she began a business devoted to real estate development and conceptual design for commercial properties; she is a partner in the Aloft hotel venture in downtown Memphis and the owner of Brickwood Hall, the Chevrolet building, and other homes and lots in various stages of development; and

WHEREAS, Leslie Smith-Thomas's goal is to improve her city one lot, one building, and one improvement at a time, and she mentors adults who are pursuing their own dreams of entrepreneurship; and

WHEREAS, a board member of Alzheimer's and Dementia Services of Memphis, Inc., Ms. Smith-Thomas is a member, public policy director, and past health director of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, as well as the recipient of its President's Award for Economic Empowerment; and

WHEREAS, wholly devoted to serving her community, Leslie Smith-Thomas is a mentor for young ladies at the Memphis Academy of Health Sciences and a University of Memphis scholarship recipient; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Smith-Thomas continues to utilize her passion for teaching, as she helps adults and youth overcome writing deficiencies by using a simple writing formula she developed early in her teaching career; and

WHEREAS, she is grateful for the love and support she shares with her husband, Dr. Marrio Thomas, and her daughters, Lauren, London, Alden, and Addison; and

WHEREAS, Leslie Smith-Thomas is an exemplary individual; her commitment to excellence and community service is representative of the Volunteer State, and she should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we congratulate Leslie Smith-Thomas upon her recognition at the Third Annual Living Legend Awards, applaud her outstanding community leadership, and extend our best wishes for continued success in her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.