

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 42

By Berke

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Pastor Gerry W. Davis,  
senior pastor of Antioch Missionary Baptist  
Church in Chattanooga.

WHEREAS, the State of Tennessee has been fortunate during its history to benefit from the outstanding leadership provided by those committed ministers of the Gospel who lead churches across this State and who, with their congregations, provide the bedrock strength that defines an orderly and just society; and

WHEREAS, one such dedicated pastor and church leader is Pastor Gerry W. Davis, who has served for twenty-five years as the senior pastor of Antioch Missionary Baptist Church in Chattanooga, during which time he has eagerly served his flock through numerous endeavors; and

WHEREAS, when the Chattanooga native became the senior pastor in 1985, there were only twenty-eight active members and the church was in disrepair; and

WHEREAS, under Pastor Davis's guidance, Antioch Missionary Baptist Church has seen its membership grow exponentially over the last few decades, during which time many additions and renovations have been made to the church; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure, Pastor Davis has paved the way to a brighter future for the church and its community. When he first took the leadership role, he called on congregants to assist with the repair of the church, which has gone through six phases of construction and renovation during the last twenty-five years; and

WHEREAS, the first phase, which began in 1989, consisted of a renovation and expansion of the entire building, and included a televised ceremony and the laying of the east wing cornerstone in honor of the renovation; and

WHEREAS, with the increase in church membership, the second phase of renovation began in 1991. It consisted of the construction of a balcony for the church followed by a renovation of the church Fellowship Hall in 1994; and

WHEREAS, the third phase of construction, which began in 1995, saw the erection of the G.W. Davis Education and Family Life Center, which included a new Fellowship Hall and additional Sunday School classrooms for the congregation. During this time, the sanctuary was also enlarged by 125 seats and the former Fellowship Hall was converted into a nursery and youth wing; and

WHEREAS, Phase IV, which commenced in 1997, expanded the right side of the church's sanctuary and added another 125 seats, along with new pulpit furnishings, to support the church's ever-growing community; and

WHEREAS, in 1999, theatrical curtains and lights were added to the sanctuary. Over the next two years, the church purchased the Betts houses, which were demolished to create extra parking for the congregants, and, in 2001, Phase V of the renovation added another 125 seats to the church and replaced the traditional pews with new theatre-style seating; and

WHEREAS, the church community focused strongly on its youth in 2002, again renovating the Nursery and Youth Wing, and building a new playground. In 2003, the church installed a new audio/visual system, purchased three plots of land, using two of the plots to create additional parking; and

WHEREAS, to honor all his years of work in renovating the church and building a thriving congregation, the Antioch Missionary Baptist Church Family changed the church's street address in 2004, renaming it as 901 G.W. Davis Drive, in Chattanooga; and

WHEREAS, 2005 saw the commencement of Phase VI, in which a \$1 million Health Resource Center was constructed in an effort to promote health and wellness for the church community; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Davis's untiring dedication and service have guided the church to its current heights. In August of 2006, in recognition of all his achievements, Reverend Joseph E. Lowery, a Civil Rights activist, delivered a powerful message about Pastor Davis, at which time

Mayor Ron Littlefield also presented Pastor Davis with a key to the city and declared August 20, 2006, as "Rev. Gerry W. Davis Day"; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Davis is also deeply devoted to his family and he always endeavors to remain true to family values of the highest order. For twenty-five years, he has enjoyed the loving companionship of his wife, Chandra; and

WHEREAS, the members of this legislative body are delighted to join in honoring this committed Christian and dynamic leader in the realm of the church and civic life — an eminent citizen of Tennessee and of his community; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we join with the members of Antioch Missionary Baptist Church in honoring Pastor Gerry W. Davis for his life of continuing service to God and humanity, as well as to his community, State, and nation, commend him upon his twenty-fifth year as a senior pastor, and offer our best wishes for every continued success in all his 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.