

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 509

By Massey

A RESOLUTION to recognize Dr. Harold A. Middlebrook, Sr., on the occasion of his retirement as pastor of Canaan Baptist Church of Christ.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those citizens who have provided outstanding leadership through their careers in ministry and who, with their congregations, provide an invaluable base for an orderly and just society; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Harold A. Middlebrook, Sr., is one such estimable person who has served with distinction for thirty-four years as Canaan Baptist Church of Christ's founding pastor; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Middlebrook recently gave his last sermon on December 29, 2013; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Middlebrook was born and raised in Memphis, Tennessee, attended Morehouse College, LeMoyne-Owen College, Memphis Theological Seminary, and the University of Tennessee Knoxville; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Middlebrook continued his commitment to education by serving as a trustee of the former Morristown College and LeMoyne-Owen College, as well as raising awareness of the problems facing historically black Knoxville College; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Middlebrook first served as the pastor of Mr. Calvary Baptist Church in Knoxville, Tennessee before founding in 1980 the Canaan Baptist Church of Christ, which he has led faithfully for thirty-four years; and

WHEREAS, under Dr. Middlebrook's exemplary leadership, Canaan Baptist Church of Christ formed the Canann Baptist Housing Corportation, which received a grant from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development to construct the Golden Age Retirement Village complex; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Middlebrook also led his congregation's effort to form the Canaan Health Care Corporation, which received a Certificate of Need for the establishment of the Holston Healthcare Center; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Middlebrook continued to demonstrate remarkable leadership during his four terms as Vice President and three terms as President of the Knoxville Interdenominational Christian Ministerial Alliance, his term as President of the Tennessee Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention, and his two terms as moderator of the Knoxville District Baptist Missionary and Educational Association, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Middlebrook has also served as the Assistant General Secretary of the National Baptist Convention, USA and is the founder and Chairman Emeritus of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration Commission of Greater Knoxville, Inc., and the former chairman of the Association of Christian Demominational Leaders, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, his congregation holds Dr. Middlebrook in high esteem, describing him as a man who, "always puts others first" and who "has always fought for the rights of people everywhere, no matter their race, creed, or color"; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his religious leadership, Dr. Middlebrook is a courageous civil rights leader, having been involved with the Committee On Appeal for Human Rights and the formation of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, as well as being a Southern Chrisitan Leadership Conference field worker, and a participant in civil rights sit-in protests; and

WHEREAS, a committed political activist, Dr. Middlebrook participated in the campaign of Archie Walter Willis, Jr., the first African American to run for mayor of Memphis and, was involved in the voter registration campaigns of the Bluff City Council of Civic Clubs and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Middlebrook fought tirelessly for civil rights across the nation, including at Birmingham, Gadsden, Dothan, Tuscaloosa, and Selma, Alabama; Danville, Virginia; St. Augustine, Florida; Memphis, Tennessee; and Tunica and Grenada, Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Middlebrook continued to be an involved community leader concerned with the American worker when he served as an organizer for the American Federation of State,

County and Municipal Employees and a special representative for the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Middlebrook was also involved, along with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in the Community On the Move of Equality and the sanitation worker strike in Memphis; as a result, Dr. Middlebrook was present at the Lorraine Motel when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Middlebrook's superlative achievements have been recognized by the many awards and accolades he has received, including the "Whitney M. Young, Jr., Lifetime Achievement Award" presented by the Knoxville Area Urban League and the "Nation Builder's Award" presented by the National Black Caucus of State Legislators; and

WHEREAS, a devoted family man, Dr. Middlebrook and his wife, Betty, have three children, two grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, even in his retirement, Dr. Middlebrook plans to continue speaking out for civil rights and for his community; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly wishes to applaud and commend Dr. Harold A. Middlebrook, Sr., for his meritorious career as a civil rights pioneer, community leader, and faithful pastor who has earned the respect and admiration of all; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we extend to Dr. Harold A. Middlebrook, Sr., our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and every continued success in 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.