

By: Senators Bookout, M. Lamoureux

SENATE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF THE REVEREND DR. HERMAN LEE
LEWELLEN, AND THE CONTRIBUTIONS HE MADE TO HIS
COMMUNITY AND TO THE STATE OF ARKANSAS.

Subtitle

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF THE REVEREND DR.
HERMAN LEE LEWELLEN, AND THE
CONTRIBUTIONS HE MADE TO HIS COMMUNITY
AND TO THE STATE OF ARKANSAS.

WHEREAS, born in Forrest City, Arkansas, on August 13, 1927, Reverend Lewellen passed from this life on May 16, 2011; was the ninth child of the late Jesse and Cornelious Malone-Lewellen; was united in matrimony to Mildred King, who was a loving wife, gifted educator, and local church and community worker, and who preceded Reverend Lewellen in death in 2006; and five (5) children were born of their union and continue to carry on his legacy, Michael, Gladys, Charlotte, Karen, and Sabrina NeKay; and

WHEREAS, after serving in the United States Air Force and working for the United States Postal Service, Reverend Lewellen was called to preach in Los Angeles, California, where he attended Biola Theological Seminary; and he furthered his education at Brewster Theological Clinic and School of Religion in Memphis, Tennessee, and received Bachelor of Theology and Doctor of Divinity degrees; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Lewellen moved with his family to Jonesboro, Arkansas, in 1961 after accepting the call to serve as the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Jonesboro; and under his leadership, the church



experienced tremendous prosperity and congregational growth and served as a supportive and spiritual home away from home for students at Arkansas State University at Jonesboro; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Lewellen served as a loving pastor to the members of the First Baptist Church until his retirement in 1996, after which he served as Pastor Emeritus until his passing; and

WHEREAS, in addition to service to the First Baptist Church in Jonesboro, Reverend Lewellen served with distinction as the President of the Consolidated White River District Congress of Christian Education for twenty-three (23) years, as a member of the Arkansas Baptist Convention for forty-nine (49) years, and as a member of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., for forty-seven (47) years; and

WHEREAS, throughout his life, Reverend Lewellen held various leadership positions, including as a member of the Arkansas Baptist College Board of Trustees and 500 Club, the Jonesboro branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Jonesboro Ministerial Alliance, and the Jonesboro Council on Human Relations; and served as a charter member of the Community Housing and Resources Board and as founding board member of Rights in Education for Students/Parents (RESP, Inc.); and

WHEREAS, for decades, he was a visible champion for minorities; and many of the first minority employees hired at factories and area businesses around Jonesboro were referred by him; and he played an active role in the recruitment of African-American faculty and staff at area elementary, secondary, and collegiate institutions; and

WHEREAS, to utilize his wise counsel for all Arkansans, President Bill Clinton, then Governor of Arkansas, appointed Reverend Lewellen to the Arkansas Rural Development Commission and awarded him the 1984 Citizen's Award for his commitment to improving human relations and his outstanding interest in public services to the state; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Lewellen received numerous local, state, and regional

recognitions throughout his lifetime, including without limitation the Martin Luther King, Jr., Award for Dedicated Service - Kappa Xi Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta in 1988; Community Service Award - Xi Rho Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. in 1991; Dedication and Service to the Betterment of Arkansans Award - Arkansas Democratic Black Caucus in 1995; Honorary Doctor of Divinity from Arkansas Baptist College in Little Rock in 1998; Lifetime Achievement Award - Craighead County Martin Luther King, Jr., Committee in 2004; Outstanding Service Award in Appreciation for Years of Service to the City of Jonesboro 2006; and Distinguished Citizen's Award - RESP, INC. in 2001, 2006, and 2007; and

WHEREAS, the City of Jonesboro honored Reverend Lewellen several times throughout the years and, on August 26, 2006, a citywide celebration was held honoring Dr. and Mrs. Lewellen for their numerous contributions to the City of Jonesboro, Craighead County, and the State of Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, on August 18, 2012, one (1) year following his passing, the City of Jonesboro opened Lewellen Park, located near his family home; and

WHEREAS, State Senator Paul Bookout honored the Reverend Dr. Herman Lee Lewellen at the citywide celebration on August 26, 2006, for his "incalculable contributions to the City of Jonesboro and the State of Arkansas," with these words, "Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, 'The ultimate measure of man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.' As a civic leader, you have been dedicated and resilient in the face of adversity and change. As the former pastor of First Baptist Church and present pastor emeritus, you are directed by God and driven by compassion to care for those who are under your spiritual guidance. As a husband and family man, you are committed to the best interest and welfare of your family. In every aspect of your life, you stood strong in the face of whatever came your way. The citizens of Jonesboro and across this state owe you a debt of gratitude for your service. We have and will continue to benefit from your example and contributions for years to come. As a friend to many and a role model to all, you have left your signature on the hearts of many and it will never be replicated or forgotten."; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Lewellen fought to ensure the social and spiritual well-being of his church and community, remedy injustices wherever they occurred, support the dignity of all people, and to share his calling as a servant of Almighty God; and as an irreplaceable statesman of integrity and faith, his legacy will last for generations and he will forever be missed; and

WHEREAS, he leaves to carry on his legacy his five (5) children, five (5) grandchildren, one (1) brother, four (4) sisters, six (6) brothers-in-law, eight (8) sisters-in-law, one (1) son-in-law, and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, relatives, friends, and colleagues in the ministry,

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE FOR THE EIGHTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

THAT the Senate acknowledges and memorializes the many contributions the Reverend Dr. Herman Lee Lewellen made to the State of Arkansas and to his community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT upon adoption of this resolution, a copy shall be presented to the family of Reverend Lewellen by the Secretary of the Senate.