

By: Representatives V. Flowers, F. Allen, E. Armstrong, Blake, K. Ferguson, Fielding, M. Hodges, Love, G. McGill, Murdock, Nicks, Walker

HOUSE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

IN RESPECTFUL MEMORY OF DR. ROBERT J. SMITH AND IN
RECOGNITION OF HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIETY.

Subtitle

IN RESPECTFUL MEMORY OF DR. ROBERT J.
SMITH AND IN RECOGNITION OF HIS
CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIETY.

WHEREAS, Dr. Robert J. Smith, born in Hayti, Missouri, to T.J. and Annie Smith, died on February 12, 2018, at the age of eighty-eight (88) years; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Smith graduated from his high school as valedictorian and matriculated at and graduated from Southern Illinois University; and

WHEREAS, in 1951 he was accepted into the University of Missouri Medical School, a time when there were no other African-American graduates of the school's medical program; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Smith earned his diploma, making him the first African-American graduate of the then two-year curriculum; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Smith then transferred to Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee, where he finished his medical degree in 1955; and

WHEREAS, while in Nashville he was so inspired by the African-American



doctors and students whom he met there, as well as by the work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., that he made the bold choice to stay in the South during the civil rights movement; and

WHEREAS, in 1966 he moved to the small town of Pine Bluff, Arkansas, where he began a practice, married, and started a family; and

WHEREAS, while in Pine Bluff, he became a leading activist throughout the city and within the state, speaking on behalf of disenfranchised African-American Arkansans who were underrepresented politically, socially, and civically; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Smith relocated to Murfreesboro, Tennessee, where he served as chief of surgery at the Veterans Administration hospital for several years; and

WHEREAS, in 1989 he and his wife, the late Dorothy J. Smith, moved to Memphis, Tennessee, where he became a prominent member of the community, involved himself in the campaigns of several politicians, held numerous professional memberships, wrote more than twenty (20) published articles, and was a devoted member of Whitehaven Middle Baptist Church for over thirty (30) years; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Smith will be remembered by his colleagues, patients, and friends for his scholarship, competence, and compassion,

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

THAT the House of Representatives remember and commend Dr. Robert J. Smith for his contributions to society.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the individual members of the House of Representatives hereby express sincere condolences to the family of Dr. Smith, and upon adoption of this resolution, that an appropriate copy be

provided to the family of Dr. Smith by the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives.