

1 State of Arkansas
2 89th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2013

SMR 2

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5 By: Senators Bookout, M. Lamoureux

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7 **SENATE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION**

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

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13 **Subtitle**

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

18
19 WHEREAS, born in Forrest City, Arkansas, on August 13, 1927, Reverend
20 Lewellen passed from this life on May 16, 2011; was the ninth child of the
21 late Jesse and Cornelious Malone-Lewellen; was united in matrimony to Mildred
22 King, who was a loving wife, gifted educator, and local church and community
23 worker, and who preceded Reverend Lewellen in death in 2006; and five (5)
24 children were born of their union and continue to carry on his legacy,
25 Michael, Gladys, Charlotte, Karen, and Sabrina NeKay; and

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

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



1 experienced tremendous prosperity and congregational growth and served as a
2 supportive and spiritual home away from home for students at Arkansas State
3 University at Jonesboro; and
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5 WHEREAS, Reverend Lewellen served as a loving pastor to the members of
6 the First Baptist Church until his retirement in 1996, after which he served
7 as Pastor Emeritus until his passing; and
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9 WHEREAS, in addition to service to the First Baptist Church in
10 Jonesboro, Reverend Lewellen served with distinction as the President of the
11 Consolidated White River District Congress of Christian Education for twenty-
12 three (23) years, as a member of the Arkansas Baptist Convention for forty-
13 nine (49) years, and as a member of the National Baptist Convention, USA,
14 Inc., for forty-seven (47) years; and
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16 WHEREAS, throughout his life, Reverend Lewellen held various leadership
17 positions, including as a member of the Arkansas Baptist College Board of
18 Trustees and 500 Club, the Jonesboro branch of the National Association for
19 the Advancement of Colored People, the Jonesboro Ministerial Alliance, and
20 the Jonesboro Council on Human Relations; and served as a charter member of
21 the Community Housing and Resources Board and as founding board member of
22 Rights in Education for Students/Parents (RESP, Inc.); and
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24 WHEREAS, for decades, he was a visible champion for minorities; and
25 many of the first minority employees hired at factories and area businesses
26 around Jonesboro were referred by him; and he played an active role in the
27 recruitment of African-American faculty and staff at area elementary,
28 secondary, and collegiate institutions; and
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30 WHEREAS, to utilize his wise counsel for all Arkansans, President Bill
31 Clinton, then Governor of Arkansas, appointed Reverend Lewellen to the
32 Arkansas Rural Development Commission and awarded him the 1984 Citizen's
33 Award for his commitment to improving human relations and his outstanding
34 interest in public services to the state; and
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36 WHEREAS, Reverend Lewellen received numerous local, state, and regional

1 recognitions throughout his lifetime, including without limitation the Martin
2 Luther King, Jr., Award for Dedicated Service - Kappa Xi Chapter of Delta
3 Sigma Theta in 1988; Community Service Award - Xi Rho Chapter of Omega Psi
4 Phi Fraternity, Inc. in 1991; Dedication and Service to the Betterment of
5 Arkansans Award - Arkansas Democratic Black Caucus in 1995; Honorary Doctor
6 of Divinity from Arkansas Baptist College in Little Rock in 1998; Lifetime
7 Achievement Award - Craighead County Martin Luther King, Jr., Committee in
8 2004; Outstanding Service Award in Appreciation for Years of Service to the
9 City of Jonesboro 2006; and Distinguished Citizen's Award - RESP, INC. in
10 2001, 2006, and 2007; and

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

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

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

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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.