

SENATE RESOLUTION 186

By Gilmore

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Dr. Reavis L. Mitchell, Jr., of Nashville.

WHEREAS, the members of this legislative body were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. Reavis L. Mitchell, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, a notable professor, writer, and historian, Dr. Reavis Mitchell was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, born and raised in Nashville, Dr. Mitchell attended public and Catholic schools before attending Fisk University, where he received his Bachelor of Arts degree; he later received his Master of Science degree from Tennessee State University and his doctorate from Middle Tennessee State University, with additional post-doctoral studies at Harvard University; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Reavis Mitchell joined the history faculty at Fisk University in 1980 and served as Professor of History and Dean of the School of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences; during his four decades at the university, he held a number of administrative positions, including Director of Institutional Advancement, Executive Assistant to the President, and Dean of Academic Affairs. He also held adjunct professorships at the College of St. Francis and Vanderbilt University; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Mitchell was one of the organizers of Nashville's Local Conference on Afro-American History and Culture, and for more than twenty years, he wrote and published a number of profiles in the conference proceedings, *Leaders of Afro-American Nashville*; and

WHEREAS, a prolific writer, Dr. Mitchell was the author of *Thy Loyal Children Make Their Way: A History of Fisk University Since 1866* and the illustrated chapter "Alexandria,

Tennessee: Dusk and Dawn of the Rural Veil," which was included in *The Souls of Black Folk: One Hundred Years Later*; he authored twelve entries in 1989's *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture* and hundreds of historical monographs in journals, magazines, and newspapers; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Reavis Mitchell was frequently consulted for his insights and analysis on African-American heritage and architecture, and his comments were published in *Time*, *Ebony*, *Black Enterprise*, *The Journal of Higher Education*, and *The Journal of Ethnic Studies*; he was a historical consultant on the PBS documentary *Jubilee Singers: Sacrifice and Glory* and a consultant for *Partners of the Heart*, a documentary chronicling the life of pioneering surgical research technician Vivien T. Thomas; and

WHEREAS, for the past twenty years, Dr. Mitchell had served as an on-air consultant for WTVF NewsChannel5 in Nashville and discussed how race relations and civil rights affected the city, and in 2019, he was featured on the program *Inside Politics* to discuss Nashville's role in the Civil Rights Movement; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Reavis Mitchell was the chairman of the Tennessee Historical Commission at the time of his death and was serving his fifth term on that august body; he was executive vice president of the Tennessee Historical Society, past chair of the Metropolitan Historical Commission, and elected chair of TSRB for nomination to The National Trust for Historic Preservation; and

WHEREAS, he was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Reavis Mitchell enjoyed the loving companionship of his wife, Dr. Patricia W. Mitchell, and was the proud father of four sons and the treasured grandfather of one granddaughter; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Mitchell leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this legislative body should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we honor the memory of Dr. Reavis L. Mitchell, Jr., reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Dr. Mitchell.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.