

2015-J1441

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION mourning the death of Reverend Gardner C. Taylor, preacher, distinguished citizen and devoted member of his community

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to pay tribute to citizens of the State of New York whose lifework and civic endeavor served to enhance the quality of life in their communities and the great State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Gardner C. Taylor of Durham, North Carolina, died on Sunday, April 5, 2015, at the age of 96; and

WHEREAS, Gardner Calvin Taylor was born to the late Reverend Washington M. and Selina Taylor on June 18, 1918, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Gardner C. Taylor distinguished himself in his profession and by his sincere dedication and substantial contribution to the welfare of his community; and

WHEREAS, In 1940, Gardner Calvin Taylor graduated from the Oberlin College School of Theology in Oberlin, Ohio; while a student, he became the pastor of Bethany Baptist Church, in nearby Elyria, Ohio, serving from 1938 to 1941; and

WHEREAS, He went on to serve as pastor of the Beulah Baptist Church in New Orleans, until 1943, and of his father's former congregation, Mount Zion Baptist Church, in Baton Rouge, until 1947; and

WHEREAS, In 1941, Reverend Gardner C. Taylor married the former Laura Bell Scott; and

WHEREAS, A year later, Reverend Gardner C. Taylor re-located to Brooklyn, New York; he held the esteemed position of Senior Pastor of the Concord Baptist Church of Christ in Bedford-Stuyvesant for 42 faithful years; and

WHEREAS, Under his luminous leadership, The Concord Baptist Church of

Christ added thousands of parishioners, established a credit union to provide loans to members of the community, built a 121-bed nursing home, and a center for the elderly, as well as an elementary school; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Gardner C. Taylor's commitment to excellence, and his spirit of humanity, carried over into all fields of enterprise, including charitable and civic endeavors; and

WHEREAS, Known as a strong advocate for public schools, Reverend Gardner C. Taylor served as a member of the New York City Board of Education from 1958-1961; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Gardner C. Taylor played a prominent role in the religious leadership of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s; in 1961, he and the late Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and other black clergy members left the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., America's largest black Christian denomination and formed their own, the Progressive National Baptist Convention, which was committed to social justice, desegregation and affirmative action; Reverend Gardner C. Taylor held the title of President from 1967-1969; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the 1960s, Reverend Gardner C. Taylor organized civil rights marches; he also served as the Director of the Urban League of Greater New York, and a member of the New York City Commission on Intergroup Relations; and

WHEREAS, In 1988, Reverend Gardner C. Taylor and the members of the Concord Baptist Church of Christ raised funds to establish the Christ Fund, a church endowment whose annual interest is used to provide community improvement grants to central Brooklyn neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, Two years later, Reverend Gardner C. Taylor officially retired from his role as Pastor and went on to present lectures and sermons in several countries, including South Africa, Zambia, Malawi,

Denmark, England, Scotland, Australia, China and Japan, as well as universities and churches across the United States; and

WHEREAS, In 1996, Reverend Gardner C. Taylor married his second wife,

the former Phillis Strong, in 1996; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Gardner C. Taylor was the author of many books and 2,000 sermons, as well as recipient of 15 honorary doctorates; moreover, he was awarded the 2000 Presidential Medal of Freedom; and

WHEREAS, In addition to his wife, Reverend Gardner C. Taylor is survived by one daughter, Martha Taylor LaCroix, and a step-grandson, Marcus LaCroix; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Reverend Gardner C. Taylor leaves behind a legacy which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to all he served and befriended; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Reverend Gardner C. Taylor, preacher, distinguished citizen and devoted member of his community; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Reverend Gardner C. Taylor.