

2017-J3666

Senate Resolution No. 3666

BY: Senator MONTGOMERY

MOURNING the death of Walter "Ball" Smith Jr.,
publishing mogul, distinguished citizen and devoted
member of his community

WHEREAS, It is with feelings of deepest regret that this Legislative
Body records the passing of Walter Smith Jr., a preeminent citizen whose
renowned career and caring commitment will long serve as standards to
which others might aspire; and

WHEREAS, Walter Smith Jr. died on Friday, November 10, 2017, at the
age of 83; and

WHEREAS, As CEO of Smith Haj Group, Walter Smith Jr. published New
York's premier weekly, The New York Beacon, and The Philadelphia
Observer, both focusing on the African-American community; in addition,
he served as CEO of The New York Beacon, a newspaper he operated for the
past 26 years; and

WHEREAS, Raised in Badin, North Carolina, Walter Smith Jr. was the
seventh of 10 children to Walter and Belle Smith Sr.; and

WHEREAS, At the age of 18, Walter Smith Jr. was drafted into the
United States Army where he valiantly served his country for 18 months
in Korea; and

WHEREAS, Upon the completion of his military service, Walter Smith Jr. earned a degree in Business from the University of North Carolina at Durham, before relocating to New York; and

WHEREAS, During this time, Automatic Data Processing (ADP) was in its early stages, and Walter Smith Jr. became one of its founding employees; after attending computer school, his input to the company was invaluable; the company has since grown from having just two offices, to managing more than 570,000 clients; and

WHEREAS, Walter Smith Jr. began his illustrious career in the newspaper business in 1981, when he turned a numerology tip sheet entitled "Big Red" into a newspaper; and

WHEREAS, Two years later, Walter Smith Jr. began printing the weekly paper under the name, The New York Beacon, focusing coverage on the African-American community of New York City and its five boroughs; during this time the newspaper boasted a circulation of 32,000; and

WHEREAS, In an effort to have a stronger voice in the region, Walter Smith Jr. founded the Northeast Publishers Association in 1991; the Association united New York's African-American newspapers into a cohesive unit to better serve its communities and to enhance the economics of its member papers; and

WHEREAS, With a steadfast and unwavering commitment to the African-American community, Walter Smith Jr. acquired The Philadelphia Observer in 2006; and

WHEREAS, In addition to his ownership of two award-winning newspapers, Walter Smith Jr. served as the Regional Director for the

National Newspaper Publishers Association, a trade organization representing more than 200 African-American newspapers nationally; and

WHEREAS, Walter Smith Jr. truly distinguished himself in his profession and by his sincere dedication and substantial contribution to the welfare of his community; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Walter Smith Jr. 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 Walter "Ball" Smith Jr., publishing mogul, 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 Walter "Ball" Smith Jr.