

2017-J3814

Senate Resolution No. 3814

BY: Senator KENNEDY

MOURNING the death of The Reverend Otis C. Tillman, family man, distinguished citizen, religious leader and devoted member of his community

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to bring full recognition and just tribute to those men and women of religious commitment who accept the responsibility of moral leadership and render the wisdom of human understanding; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Otis C. Tillman died on Wednesday, January 24, 2018, at the age of 98; and

WHEREAS, Born in Shadyvale, Georgia, Reverend Otis C. Tillman grew up in Ann Arbor, Michigan; at the young age of 15, he moved to Lackawanna, New York, in search of employment during the Great Depression; he eventually found work as a travelling evangelist; and

WHEREAS, In 1941, Reverend Otis C. Tillman married the love of his life, the former Hope Geraldine "Dene" Bradshaw; together, the couple raised three children; and

WHEREAS, After attending the former Evangel Bible Institute in Florida, Reverend Otis C. Tillman and his wife moved back to the Buffalo area, where he worked at the General Motors Engine Plant for a short

time before devoting himself to establishing his ministry; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Otis C. Tillman began his lifelong mission of helping others by opening his home to local children for Bible classes and craft sessions; in 1963, Cold Spring Bible Chapel found its permanent home at 100 Northland Avenue in Buffalo; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Otis C. Tillman and his wife then established the Gospel Expansion Foundation which supported two radio programs, "The Chapel Hour", which became the longest running program on WBLK, and "The Black Community Speaks"; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Otis C. Tillman truly loved all people, especially the children of his community; he organized camping trips, led youth basketball teams, and established a youth-centered pavilion as a safe play and learning space; this great man also opened a food and clothing pantry to support his East Side community; and

WHEREAS, In 2010, Reverend Otis C. Tillman retired from his official duties as a pastor, however, he continued to preach his loving message to the congregation on occasion; and

WHEREAS, For his steadfast and unremitting commitment to his ministry and community, Reverend Otis C. Tillman was the recipient of the 2005 Black Achievers in Industry Award, and was the first African American person to become a member of the Board of Directors of the City Mission; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Otis C. Tillman is survived by his wife, Hope Geraldine Tillman; one daughter, Charlene A. Cherry; two sons, Joel O. Tillman and Daniel M. Tillman; five grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Otis C. Tillman brought to his ministry an overwhelming spirit of charity and compassion, acting from vision and enlightenment in conducting his administrative and spiritual duties, while always displaying the highest standards of personal and professional integrity and dedication; and

WHEREAS, This distinguished man of God always gave guidance and wisdom to the many entrusted to his care and administered abundantly and unstintingly to the spiritual and corporal needs of all; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Reverend Otis C. Tillman 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 honor the life and accomplishments of The Reverend Otis C. Tillman, and to express its deepest condolences to his family, colleagues and friends who mourn his passing; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of The Reverend Otis C. Tillman.