

By: Senator(s) Harden, Hall, Horhn

To: Rules

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 33  
(As Adopted by Senate)

1 A RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE REVEREND KEITH TONKEL OF WELLS  
2 MEMORIAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IN JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI, UPON HIS  
3 RECEIPT OF THE FRIENDSHIP AWARD PRESENTED BY JACKSON 2000 AT THE  
4 ANNUAL FRIENDSHIP BALL.

5 WHEREAS, the Reverend Keith Tonkel came to Jackson 30 years  
6 ago to pastor a church whose future appeared as bleak as its  
7 surroundings; and

8 WHEREAS, once vibrant Wells Memorial United Methodist Church  
9 was down to a few dozen members, and was falling victim to  
10 changing demographics that led other churches to follow white  
11 migration out of central Jackson, but today through the leadership  
12 of Rev. Tonkel, this church boasts at least 550 members and  
13 represents a ministry and presence in this neighborhood; and

14 WHEREAS, Tonkel will be one of two recipients of the  
15 Friendship Award presented by Jackson 2000 at the annual  
16 Friendship Ball; and

17 WHEREAS, the award honors people who bring the community  
18 together, and with a congregation best described as eclectic, Rev.  
19 Tonkel fits the criteria quite well; and

20 WHEREAS, Keith graduated from Millsaps in 1962 and graduated  
21 from Emory University School of Theology in Atlanta, is Sunday  
22 school and ministerial director of "The United Methodist Hour,"  
23 which airs throughout the Southeast, and his awards include:  
24 Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Society, Pi Kappa Delta  
25 National Speech and Oratory Society; Alpha Psi Omega National  
26 Dramatics and Theatrical Arts Society; and Outstanding Young Man  
27 from Gulfport Jaycees, Sertoma Service to Mankind Award; and

28  
29           WHEREAS, Reverend Tonkel's strong leadership in everyday  
30 community outreach in which his church has been involved includes  
31 the following: Operation Shoestring, which serves underprivileged  
32 members of the community, a neighborhood health clinic, Habitat  
33 for Humanity, establishment of the Jackson Medical Mall that  
34 rejuvenated the deteriorating Jackson Mall, sponsors the annual  
35 Wellsfest public celebration, runs Wells House for the aged,  
36 offers programs for nearby Galloway Elementary, and perhaps most  
37 importantly, listens to the voices of the neighborhood; and

38           WHEREAS, Keith was married in 1968 to the former Patsy  
39 Myrick, and the couple have three children and several foster  
40 children, and it is with great pride that we recognize this  
41 individual for his dedication to his church and community:

42           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF  
43 MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby commend Reverend Keith Tonkel,  
44 Pastor of Wells Memorial United Methodist Church for his receipt  
45 of the Friendship Award presented by Jackson 2000 at the February  
46 27, 1999, Friendship Ball.

47           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to  
48 Rev. Tonkel and his family and be made available to members of the  
49 Capitol Press Corps.