

By: Representative Robinson

To: Rules

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 83

1 A RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF REVEREND GERALD
2 F. SAWYER AND EXPRESSING DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO HIS FAMILY, FRIENDS
3 AND CONGREGATION UPON HIS PASSING.

4 WHEREAS, it is written in Ecclesiastes 3:1 that "To
5 everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under
6 the Heaven," and as such, on Tuesday, March 16, 2021, the
7 immaculate author and finisher of our soul's destiny summoned the
8 mortal presence of dearly beloved, Reverend Gerald F. Sawyer, of
9 Overt, Mississippi, to eternal rest, rendering great sorrow and
10 loss to his family, friends and congregation; and

11 WHEREAS, born on Tuesday, November 4, 1941, to Mr. George and
12 Mrs. Mary Sawyer, in Amory, Mississippi, Reverend Sawyer, being
13 led by the spirit of God, labored in the vineyards of service at
14 Antioch United Pentecostal Church, in Laurel, Mississippi, for
15 42 years, and during his illustrious tenure there, the church was
16 truly propelled forward as he provided an unparalleled level of
17 religious leadership and guidance to his congregation in a variety
18 of capacities, which serve as an example to the entire citizenry



19 of the State of Mississippi of what is best in the human spirit
20 when rooted and grounded in insurmountable belief and faith in
21 God; and

22 WHEREAS, since beginning his service in the ministry,
23 Reverend Sawyer certainly fulfilled his vision to spread the Word
24 of God, care for those who are hurting and positively impact the
25 community of Laurel, Mississippi, and beyond, through his
26 extensive mission work around the world; and

27 WHEREAS, throughout his life, Reverend Sawyer had an
28 incredible passion for reaching out to those most in need through
29 missions, as he touched a tremendous amount of lives all around
30 the world by building at least 380 churches in over 24 countries
31 on four continents; and

32 WHEREAS, from a young age, Reverend Sawyer's mother
33 instilled within him and his siblings a great love for missions,
34 and she was known for her faithful devotion to God and sacrificial
35 giving, as she was not a wealthy woman and gave beyond her means;
36 and

37 WHEREAS, when Reverend Sawyer received the spirit of God, his
38 mother's compassion and love for missions lit a fire within him,
39 and his focus shifted immediately to mission work; and

40 WHEREAS, Reverend Sawyer's dedication to missions multiplied
41 exponentially throughout the later years of his life, and for his
42 extraordinary service, he was honored with the Lifetime Service



43 Award by Mr. David Tipton, the Superintendent for the Mississippi
44 District of United Pentecostal International; and

45 WHEREAS, with a true heart for giving, the members of Antioch
46 United Pentecostal Church, which includes about 90 individuals,
47 gave astonishing amounts under Reverend Sawyer's leadership,
48 giving more per capita than any other United Pentecostal church in
49 North America; and

50 WHEREAS, Reverend Sawyer once stated that he did not directly
51 ask his congregation for donations to missions, rather, he would
52 say, "We are building a church, and if you would like to give,
53 come see me"; and

54 WHEREAS, making sure that the donated funds were used to meet
55 the needs of the people, Reverend Sawyer remained in constant
56 contact with missionaries at each location to figure out where
57 most of the need was in each area, and since the churches that
58 were built became the center of each community, both members and
59 nonmembers of each church are able to have their needs met at
60 their community church; and

61 WHEREAS, Reverend Sawyer's last request in life was to build
62 one more church, and he did just that, as a check was mailed for
63 that one last church on one of his last days on this earthly plane
64 before meeting his creator in the sweet by-and-by; and

65 WHEREAS, Reverend Sawyer's amazing life truly fulfilled the
66 Word of God in Matthew 24:14, that states, "And the Good News



67 about the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, so
68 that all nations will hear it..."; and

69 WHEREAS, men of faith of Reverend Sawyer's caliber are truly
70 remarkable and uphold everything righteous about a country that
71 has its very founding premised upon a spiritual foundation in God
72 as the sovereign Deity; and

73 WHEREAS, a genuine and distinguished man of outstanding
74 character, exceptional courage and strength beyond comparison,
75 Reverend Sawyer's devotion to his faith, his family, and to his
76 community will always be remembered, and precious memories of time
77 spent with him will hopefully continue to provide warmth, peace
78 and comfort to his loved ones until they are reunited with him in
79 glory; and

80 WHEREAS, though he has traversed the river of life to reunite
81 with those who answered God's summons to life eternal and now
82 beckon his arrival to the celestial shores of Heaven's grandeur,
83 such as his wife, Mrs. Norine L. Sawyer; first wife, Mrs. Linda
84 Sawyer; parents, Mr. George and Mrs. Mary Sawyer; son, Brad Boone;
85 and brother, Thomas Sawyer, the legacy of Reverend Sawyer's
86 indelible imprint upon our lives will continue to refresh the
87 hearts and fond memories of his loved ones, including his
88 children, Brent Sawyer, Mitch Boone, Jim Boone, Kathy Johnson and
89 Corie Denning; daughter-in-law, Anna Boone; 14 grandchildren; 23
90 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild; sister, Ann
91 MacKenzie; brothers, Jerry Sawyer, Butch Sawyer, Garry Sawyer,



92 John Sawyer and Steve Sawyer; the Antioch United Pentecostal
93 Church congregation; and a host of nieces, nephews, other
94 relatives and dear friends; and

95 WHEREAS, Reverend Sawyer will forever be loved, cherished and
96 missed by all who knew him, and since it is written in 2
97 Corinthians 5:8, that to be "absent from the body is to be present
98 with the Lord," his family and friends can find peace and comfort
99 during this difficult time, and undoubtedly know that he is
100 shouting with joy on the streets of gold with many jewels in his
101 crown; and

102 WHEREAS, as the true measure of the eternal impact that he
103 made in this world may never be known, Reverend Sawyer dedicated
104 his life to bringing many souls to know Jesus Christ as their
105 personal Lord and Savior, and as he was not only a beloved pastor
106 to his congregation, but also a wonderful friend, he loved his
107 church and family more than life itself, and his faithful service
108 and passionate love for missions will continue to be an
109 inspiration that will surely provide a road map for others to
110 imitate for years to come; and

111 WHEREAS, it is the policy of the House of Representatives to
112 recognize and commend the lives of extraordinary Mississippians,
113 especially those such as Reverend Sawyer, who truly inspired
114 everyone he met and whose life's light illuminated the path of
115 hope for all he encountered along his earthly sojourn:



116 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
117 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby
118 mourn the loss and honor the life and legacy of Reverend Gerald F.
119 Sawyer, and express sincere and deepest sympathy to his family,
120 friends and congregation upon his passing.

121 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
122 furnished to the family of Reverend Gerald F. Sawyer and to the
123 members of the Capitol Press Corps.

