

By: Senator(s) Williams, Barnett, Frazier,  
Horhn, Jackson (11th), Thomas

To: Rules

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 22

1 A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND COMMENDING BISHOP JAMES EDWARD  
2 SWANSON, SR., ON HIS TENURE AS THE RESIDENT BISHOP OF THE  
3 MISSISSIPPI CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH FOR HIS  
4 SPIRITUAL AND CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
5 AND AS THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN TO LEAD THE MISSISSIPPI UNITED  
6 METHODIST DENOMINATION.

7 WHEREAS, we join the membership of the Mississippi Conference  
8 of The United Methodist Church in honoring the service of Resident  
9 Bishop James Edward Swanson, Sr., who is completing his tenure as  
10 Resident Bishop of the Mississippi Conference. His tenure began  
11 September 1, 2012, with his appointment as the first African  
12 American to lead The Mississippi United Methodist denomination;  
13 and

14 WHEREAS, with more than 12 million members worldwide, the  
15 United Methodist Church is governed by a General Conference that  
16 meets every four years. The annual and central conferences elect  
17 delegates to the General Conference. The Resident Bishop is the  
18 presiding officer of the annual conference. The Mississippi  
19 Conference is divided into 11 districts, and each district is  
20 administered by a district superintendent in consultation with the



21 Bishop. The Mississippi Conference meets annually, usually in  
22 June, for its regular business session. An equal number of clergy  
23 members and lay members from the conference meet together to  
24 worship, celebrate the previous year's ministries and set a course  
25 for the coming year. At the conclusion of each conference, the  
26 Bishop announces the clergy appointments or assignments: number  
27 of churches in Mississippi: 942 apportioned as of July 1, 2021;  
28 memberships in Mississippi: 150,506 as of July 1, 2021; total  
29 number of clergy in Mississippi: 870 as of July 1, 2021; and  
30 number of active appointed clergy in Mississippi: approximately  
31 870 as of July 1, 2021; and

32 WHEREAS, Bishop Swanson was elected a Bishop of The United  
33 Methodist Church during the 2004 Southeastern Jurisdiction  
34 Conference. He was assigned to the Holston Conference, where the  
35 Episcopal office is located in Knoxville, Tennessee. Bishop  
36 Swanson served the Holston Conference for eight years. Under his  
37 leadership, the Sudan Mission was initiated. The number of United  
38 Methodist Congregations in Sudan grew from three to 30 between  
39 2006 and 2012. A residential home for Sudan's District  
40 Superintendent was built and used as a training site for Clergy  
41 and Laity of South Sudan. Plans were laid for Holston to raise  
42 funds for the campaign, "Imagine No Malaria" to prevent and treat  
43 the deadly malaria disease in Sub-Saharan Africa. The campaign  
44 resulted in \$1.2 Million; and



45 WHEREAS, Bishop Swanson's tenure as Resident Bishop began  
46 September 1, 2012, with his first public appearance one day  
47 earlier to the conference's Seashore District. He went there to  
48 be with those affected by Hurricane Isaac. The hurricane made  
49 landfall on August 28, 2012, causing additional devastation to  
50 Mississippi coastal communities recovering from Hurricane Katrina  
51 seven years earlier. Bishop Swanson listened to the people of  
52 Mississippi and discovered values deep within their hearts - love,  
53 generosity, justice and apprenticeship - thus becoming the Core  
54 Four Values of the Mississippi Conference; and

55 WHEREAS, Bishop Swanson is currently completing his second  
56 quadrennium (2016-2020) as the President of the General Commission  
57 of United Methodist Men. Bishop Swanson is a member of the  
58 International Association of Methodist Schools, Colleges and  
59 Universities. He also serves on the Board of Trustees for Emory  
60 University, Gammon Theological Seminary, Rust College and Millsaps  
61 College; and

62 WHEREAS, Bishop Swanson's contagious spirit of hospitality, a  
63 determination to excel and spirited preaching has helped bring  
64 life, laughter and light to congregations in the Mississippi  
65 Conference and beyond; and

66 WHEREAS, Bishop Swanson has preached, lectured and led  
67 workshops in over 20 nations worldwide and throughout the United  
68 States. He and his wife, Delphine Ramsey Swanson, have six  
69 children and 23 grandchildren; and



70           WHEREAS, Bishop Swanson is an example to others of how to  
71 live your convictions with courage, and it is with great pride  
72 that we join the Mississippi Conference of The United Methodist  
73 Church in honoring a Christian gentleman:

74           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF  
75 MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby recognize and commend Bishop James  
76 Edward Swanson, Sr., on his tenure as the Resident Bishop of the  
77 Mississippi Conference of The United Methodist Church for his  
78 spiritual and charitable contributions to the State of Mississippi  
79 and as the first African American to lead The Mississippi United  
80 Methodist denomination, and extend the best wishes of the  
81 Mississippi Senate to Bishop Swanson and his family on the  
82 occasion of his retirement.

83           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to  
84 Bishop Swanson and his family, forwarded to the Mississippi  
85 Conference of The United Methodist Church, and made available to  
86 the Capitol Press Corps.

