

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.

