

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 93

BY SENATOR JENKINS

A RESOLUTION

To express the sincere condolences of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the death of Dr. Bessie D. Smith, a pioneering educator, community leader, and devoted public servant.

WHEREAS, it is with deep sorrow and profound respect that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana acknowledges the passing on May 2, 2025, of Dr. Bessie D. Smith, a beloved educator, community activist, and former businesswoman whose life was dedicated to service, education, and the upliftment of others; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Bessie D. Smith was the cherished daughter of Lena Dupree Davenport and Eddie Davenport Jr., and she built her life on the foundations of family, faith, and civic engagement; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Smith was a trailblazer in the fight against poverty in the Stoner Hill community, where she worked tirelessly to develop and lead programs that addressed critical needs and brought meaningful improvements to her neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, her leadership extended across various civic and professional organizations, including the Caddo Community Action Agency, Inc. Board, Green Oaks High School Scholarship Board, the NAACP as an officer, the National Council of Negro Women, and the Metropolitan Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Smith's enduring legacy as an educator was marked by her service at Riverside Elementary School, where she inspired generations of students, and by the recognition she received, including the Outstanding Elementary Teacher of America in 1972 and 1974, and the Caddo Parish School Board's Outstanding Service to Education and Community Service Award; and

WHEREAS, she held a Doctor of Education, exemplifying her unrelenting commitment to learning and teaching, and she used her knowledge to uplift her community and advocate for positive change; and

WHEREAS, her public service also included contributions to Habitat for Humanity and her role as the president of the Stoner Hill Neighborhood Association and was

affectionately known as the "Mayor of Stoner Hill", reflecting a deep-rooted commitment to both housing security and local governance; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Smith was a woman of faith and a devoted member of Hopewell Baptist Church, drawing spiritual strength that informed every aspect of her service; and

WHEREAS, her devotion extended beyond her public endeavors into her personal life, where she was a loving wife for fifty years, a family-centered woman, and a role model to all who knew her; and

WHEREAS, the people of Caddo Parish and the state of Louisiana are deeply grateful for the life and legacy of Dr. Bessie D. Smith, whose work will continue to resonate through the lives she touched.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express its sincere condolences upon learning of the death of Bessie D. Smith.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the family of Bessie D. Smith.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE