

House Resolution 1688

By: Representative Bearden of the 68<sup>th</sup>

#### A RESOLUTION

- 1 Recognizing and commending Dr. Thomas Andrew Dorsey; and for other purposes.
- 2 WHEREAS, Dr. Thomas Andrew Dorsey was born July 1, 1899, in Villa Rica, Georgia to  
3 Reverend Thomas Madison Dorsey and Mrs. Etta Plant Dorsey; and
- 4 WHEREAS, his father preached at Mount Prospect Baptist Church and his mother played  
5 the piano, and Dr. Dorsey's love of music started when he was a small child playing under  
6 the piano while his mother played; and
- 7 WHEREAS, Dr. Dorsey published his first blues song while a teenager living in Atlanta, and  
8 around 1920, he moved to Chicago and wrote both gospel and blues; and
- 9 WHEREAS, Dr. Dorsey became known as Georgia Tom and played the piano with Ma  
10 Rainey and her Wildcats Jazz Band, and he is credited with writing over 400 jazz and rhythm  
11 and blues songs; and
- 12 WHEREAS, Dr. Dorsey was the choir director for Chicago's Pilgrim Baptist Church for  
13 nearly 40 years, and became known as the "Father of Gospel Music" when he created the  
14 spiritual genre of music which merged sacred text with the secular blues sound; and
- 15 WHEREAS, one of Dr. Dorsey's most famous compositions, *Take My Hand Precious Lord*,  
16 was written in 1932, a few days after his beloved wife, Nettie Harper Dorsey, died in  
17 childbirth followed a day later by the death of their newborn son; and
- 18 WHEREAS, Dr. Dorsey cofounded the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses  
19 in 1933, and over his lifetime wrote hundreds of gospel songs including *Lead Me to the Rock*,  
20 *Say a Little Prayer for Me*, and *Peace in the Valley* which he wrote for Mahalia Jackson; and

1 WHEREAS, Dr. Dorsey was elected into the Georgia Music Hall of Fame in September  
2 1981, and was also elected to the Gospel Music Association's Hall of Fame in 1982; and

3 WHEREAS, a Georgia historic marker was erected in Villa Rica in July, 1994, 18 months  
4 after Dr. Dorsey's death in Chicago on January 23, 1993, and the Thomas A. Dorsey  
5 Birthplace and Gospel Heritage Festival was established, with annual festivals being held  
6 each summer celebrating the life and songs of Dr. Dorsey; and

7 WHEREAS, it is abundantly fitting and proper for this body to recognize with particularity  
8 the outstanding accomplishments of this extraordinary individual.

9 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that  
10 the members of this body join together to recognize Dr. Thomas Andrew Dorsey and  
11 commend his outstanding contributions to this state and our country.

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized  
13 and directed to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to the City of Villa Rica.