

## House Resolution 277

By: Representatives James of the 135<sup>th</sup> and Sellier of the 136<sup>th</sup>

## A RESOLUTION

1 Honoring the life and memory of Mr. Robert Thomas Church, Sr., and inviting his family to  
2 appear before the House of Representatives; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, Mr. Robert Thomas Church, Sr., was born in Athens-Clarke County, Georgia,  
4 on September 26, 1909, to sharecropper parents and humble beginnings; and

5 WHEREAS, Mr. Church attended the Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia, for both high  
6 school and college, working his way through school by cleaning rooms at the Holly Tree Inn  
7 guesthouse; and

8 WHEREAS, after earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Education from  
9 Hampton Institute, Mr. Church returned home to his beloved Georgia to begin his prosperous  
10 and selfless career in the field of education; and

11 WHEREAS, after spending time as a teacher and a principal, Mr. Church was hired by the  
12 University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service as its first Negro County Extension  
13 Agent, teaching the latest agricultural techniques to African American farmers and their  
14 families in Fort Valley, Georgia; and

15 WHEREAS, Mr. Church's work was instrumental in increasing agricultural production and  
16 improving the standard of living for countless families in Georgia and encouraging area  
17 youth to become involved in state farming competitions and their local 4-H clubs; and

18 WHEREAS, in 1949, Mr. Church assumed leadership of Fort Valley State College's Ham  
19 and Egg Show, an annual competition showcasing home-cured hams and high quality eggs,  
20 and his guidance and dedication led to its wide expansion into a regional event and to it being  
21 featured on NBC national news; and

22 WHEREAS, after earning his master's degree from Tuskegee Institute in 1958, Mr. Church  
23 worked to remove past inequalities and establish equal pay for County Extension Agents of  
24 all races; and

25 WHEREAS, after his retirement from the Georgia Extension Service in 1969, Mr. Church  
26 remained committed to public service and was elected to the Fort Valley City Council, where  
27 he was responsible for spearheading the city's certification, paving streets, and providing  
28 sidewalks; and

29 WHEREAS, Mr. Church also dedicated 25 years to the Department of Children and Family  
30 Services at the local and state levels, serving as chairman for 15 years; and

31 WHEREAS, a true champion for others during his life, Mr. Church was an active mentor and  
32 advisor for the United Way, assisted local farmers with limited means apply for loans and  
33 social security, and worked zealously to obtain federal grant money to upgrade substandard  
34 housing in Peach County; and

35 WHEREAS, his remarkable life and service was recognized in 2003 with the National  
36 History Maker's Award and the prestigious George Washington Carver Public Service Hall  
37 of Fame Award by Tuskegee University; and

38 WHEREAS, this benevolent and honorable gentleman gave inspiration to many through his  
39 high ideals, morals, and deep concern for his fellow citizens, and it is only fitting and proper  
40 that he be appropriately recognized for his many contributions to the State of Georgia and  
41 this nation.

42 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that  
43 the members of this body hereby join in honoring the life and memory of Mr. Robert Thomas  
44 Church, Sr.

45 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of this body invite Mr. Church's daughter,  
46 Mrs. Ruby Annette Church Engram, and son, Mr. Robert T. Church, Jr., to appear before the  
47 House of Representatives on such date and at such time as determined by the Speaker of the  
48 House in order to receive an appropriate copy of this resolution.