

House Resolution 569

By: Representative Brooks of the 55th

A RESOLUTION

1 Honoring the life and memory of Reverend Dr. Joseph Lawrence Roberts, Jr.; and for other
2 purposes.

3 WHEREAS, the State of Georgia mourns the loss of one of its most distinguished citizens
4 with the passing of Reverend Dr. Joseph Lawrence Roberts, Jr., on February 15, 2015; and

5 WHEREAS, Joseph Lawrence Roberts, Jr., was born on February 17, 1935, in Chicago,
6 Illinois, and attended Chicago Public Schools throughout his childhood; and

7 WHEREAS, he graduated cum laude from Knoxville College in Knoxville, Tennessee, in
8 1956, and in the 1960s he attended the Union Theological Seminary in New York City where
9 he obtained a Masters of Divinity (M.Div.) degree; he then attended Princeton Theological
10 Seminary and earned a Masters of Theology (Th.M.) degree; and

11 WHEREAS, he was hand-picked by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Sr., to serve as the senior
12 pastor of the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia; and

13 WHEREAS, he served as Ebenezer's senior pastor for 30 years where he was recognized as
14 an energetic orator, accomplished administrator, talented musician, and visionary; and

15 WHEREAS, during his tenure, Ebenezer's congregation grew by as many as 2,000 new
16 members, the church became more solvent, new outreach and education programs were
17 established, and the new Horizon Sanctuary was successfully financed and finally dedicated
18 on March 21, 1999; and

19 WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. Roberts received many awards and honors throughout his career,
20 including the distinguished alumni awards from Union Theological Seminary and Princeton
21 Theological Seminary; and

22 WHEREAS, a man of deep and abiding faith, he published a collection of sermons,
23 *Sideswiped by Eternity: Sermons from Ebenezer Baptist Church*, which demonstrated his
24 commitment to the legacy of Dr. M. L. King, Jr., his parish, and the message of Jesus Christ;
25 and

26 WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. Roberts was united in love and marriage to Jean Esther Wortham, and
27 their union was blessed with two lovely daughters, Cheryl and Cynthia, one son, Carlyle
28 "CJ", and six wonderful grandchildren; and

29 WHEREAS, this compassionate and generous man gave inspiration to many through his high
30 ideals, moral values, and deep concern for all people; and

31 WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. Roberts will long be remembered for the devotion, patience, and
32 understanding he demonstrated to his family and friends; he was greatly admired and will be
33 missed by everyone who had the great fortune of knowing him.

34 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
35 the members of this body join in honoring the life and memory of Reverend Dr. Joseph
36 Lawrence Roberts, Jr., and express their deepest and most sincere regret at his passing.

37 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
38 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the
39 family of Reverend Dr. Joseph Lawrence Roberts, Jr.