

House Resolution 957

By: Representatives Burnough of the 77th, Jackson of the 64th, and Smyre of the 135th

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing and commending Reverend Dr. Joe Samuel Ratliff on the occasion of his 40th
2 pastoral anniversary; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Joe Samuel Ratliff has demonstrated his commitment to teaching
4 the Gospel, witnessing Christ through word and deed, and addressing the physical,
5 psychological, intellectual, and spiritual needs of others; and

6 WHEREAS, a native of Lumberton, North Carolina, Dr. Ratliff answered the call to ministry
7 while a student at Morehouse College; and he has spent a lifetime answering God's call to
8 be His messenger to do His will; and

9 WHEREAS, Dr. Ratliff's vision and direction have helped Brentwood Baptist Church in
10 Houston, Texas, grow in size and influence, uplifting the community like the light of
11 Bethlehem and serving as a spiritual leader and place for fellowship; and

12 WHEREAS, Dr. Ratliff was elected as Brentwood's pastor in 1980 and, by 2000, had grown
13 the congregation from 500 members to a megachurch of 12,000; today, the church holds two
14 Sunday services, averaging 5,000 worshipers each week; and

15 WHEREAS, Dr. Ratliff has distinguished himself as a scholar-pastor in the African
16 American tradition of preaching and has sought excellence in numerous endeavors, among
17 them being the first African American pastor to lead the Union Baptist Association, the
18 largest urban Southern Baptist organization in the nation, representing more than 500
19 churches and missions; and

20 WHEREAS, he was founding president of the National African American Fellowship of the
21 Southern Baptist Convention; and he founded the Brentwood Community Foundation, which
22 has awarded over \$900,000.00 in grants and scholarships to deserving youth since its
23 inception; and

24 WHEREAS, Dr. Ratliff's influence in the greater community also extends to serving on
25 numerous prestigious boards, including the Board of Trustees of Morehouse School of
26 Religion; the Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial Project Foundation in Washington, D.C.;
27 and the Truett Theological Seminary at Baylor University; and

28 WHEREAS, whether the task is preparing a sermon, visiting the sick, counseling the
29 troubled, baptizing a new believer, or acting as a theologian, educator, administrator, or
30 humanitarian, Dr. Ratliff has shown the energy, devotion, and commitment truly reflective
31 of divine guidance; and

32 WHEREAS, it is abundantly fitting and proper that this enduring example of God's message
33 of peace and love be recognized and congratulated for his innumerable good works rendered
34 on behalf of persons.

35 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
36 the members of this body recognize and commend Reverend Dr. Joe Samuel Ratliff on the
37 wonderful occasion of his 40th pastoral anniversary and extend best wishes for many more
38 years of successful fellowship and leadership.

39 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
40 and directed to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to
41 Reverend Dr. Joe Samuel Ratliff.