

House Resolution 1796

By: Representative Dickerson of the 113th

A RESOLUTION

1 Congratulating and commending Saint Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church on its 140th
2 anniversary; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, Saint Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1878, and the
4 first church structure was built at a sacrifice, as wages and earning power were at a low ebb
5 for persons of African descent; Mr. L. Bates, a successful blacksmith in the community,
6 donated the land for the church and the first pastor was the Reverend Andrew Paul Beslaw;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, around 1900, the church burned down, and many of the first records were lost;
9 therefore, we rely on memories of those whose parents were pioneers in establishing the
10 church. After the first loss by fire, these faithful Christians rebuilt the church on the present
11 site. This time they were able to build a parsonage for the pastor on the original site. Two
12 years later, fire struck again. Both the church and the parsonage were lost and rebuilt in the
13 same year. In 1902, Bishop Henry McNeal Turner dedicated the new buildings to the glory
14 of God; and

15 WHEREAS, from 1902 to 1908, the marble table top, which now stands in the vestibule, was
16 used for the communion table. It was purchased by the first trustees of record in 1904. They
17 were Brother W.M. Wright, Williams Robinson, J.W. Smith, W.M. Morris, Lee Leslie, Tom
18 Nelson, J.M. Marks, T.M. Morris, and N.J. Broughton. During the Depression, Sister
19 Mahalie Clark purchased and donated the first piano to the church. The church was
20 connected to General (Connectional) Church in 1912. Joseph Simeon Flipper was Bishop;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, from 1943 to 1945, the missionary society was revived, and the members were
23 able to do great works to build up the church and involve the young people in more church
24 activities. From 1968 to 1976, Sunday school rooms, offices, a kitchen, a fellowship area,
25 a choir room, a minister's study, and restrooms were added. Pulpit furniture, new pews,

26 carpet, and a new piano were purchased. From 1982 to 1986, the church was renovated and
27 rededicated, the baptismal font was purchased, and new stained glass windows were
28 installed; and

29 WHEREAS, from 1988 to 1991, Saint Paul received national television exposure as a
30 location for television series, *In the Heat of the Night*, and the movie, *I'll Fly Away*. During
31 this time, the church became a permanent registration site for Newton County voters. Under
32 Reverend Augusta H. Hall, Jr., many improvements were made to the church property: lights
33 were added to the parking lot, church records were computerized, a new public address
34 system was installed, an organ and drums were added to the music department, additional
35 property was procured, sidewalks added, and several ministries were organized, including
36 Sons of Allen, Senior Citizens and Retirees Program, Church Nursery, Audio Ministry, Male
37 and AH Hall Usher Boards, Male Chorus, Young Adult Ministry, Women's Ministry,
38 Greeters Ministry, and Couples Ministry; and

39 WHEREAS, under the tutelage of Reverend Thomas R. Stegall, the church is entering a new
40 phase of growth and is striving toward building a new church in the very near future. The
41 church is grateful to God who inspired the pioneers to build the first church, for without this
42 beginning the congregation would not have had anything upon which to build.

43 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
44 the members of this body congratulate Saint Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church on
45 its 140th anniversary, commend it for its many outstanding contributions on behalf of the
46 citizens of Georgia, and extend best wishes for its continued growth, development, and
47 success.

48 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
49 and directed to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to Saint
50 Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church.