

Regular Session, 2014

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 177

BY REPRESENTATIVE HOFFMANN

A RESOLUTION

To posthumously commend the Reverend Andrew Thomas "A. T." Mitchell, known in his lifetime as "Brother Tom", for his many contributions to religious and community life in West Monroe, Louisiana.

WHEREAS, Andrew Thomas Mitchell was born in 1895 in a small Mississippi town; and

WHEREAS, both his father and grandfather were Baptist ministers; and

WHEREAS, he accepted the ministry as a call from God at the age of nineteen; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Mitchell first ministered at a church in Angie, Louisiana, then pastored in Bernice, Louisiana, until 1940, when he felt the Lord calling him to establish a church in West Monroe; and

WHEREAS, starting in a simple open-sided structure built of posts and tin, "Brother Tom", as he was known by then, grew his church steadily; and

WHEREAS, though that church, Ridge Avenue Baptist, would eventually become the second-largest church in West Monroe, Brother Tom felt that his calling was not to build the largest church, but to help other communities build churches in their own neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, when he became aware of churchgoers attending Ridge Avenue Baptist from other communities, he would encourage them to buy property and would help them to secure financing, build a church of their own, and find a preacher; and

WHEREAS, in the course of his career, Brother Tom would mentor twenty-four young men who became ordained as ministers, and two who became missionaries; and

WHEREAS, Brother Tom was highly involved in community life beyond his church, and was one of West Monroe's early leaders who pushed for establishment of a high school and a hospital in his city; and

WHEREAS, he was so strong in his conviction that West Monroe needed a hospital that when he was unable to muster the necessary support from among his fellow Baptists to get a hospital built, he joined with efforts of local Methodists and played a key role in the founding of Glenwood Hospital in the community; and

WHEREAS, a former mayor of West Monroe may have said it best when he stated that if you needed a community improvement, you should let Brother Tom know, then get out of his way while he went to work on it; and

WHEREAS, Brother Tom was active as a minister until the age of ninety-three, spending the last twenty-seven years of his career as an interim pastor at numerous area churches, some of which he helped to organize earlier in his life; and

WHEREAS, he died in 1991 at the age of ninety-six in his beloved West Monroe, where his many notable contributions to the community are celebrated to this day.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby posthumously commend the Reverend Andrew Thomas "A.T." Mitchell, known in his lifetime as "Brother Tom", for his many contributions to religious and community life in West Monroe, Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the family of Reverend Andrew Thomas Mitchell.

---

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES