

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 845

By Matlock

A RESOLUTION to recognize Pastor Richard Douglas DeMerchant on the occasion of his thirty-fifth anniversary as the Associate Pastor of First Baptist Church in Lenoir City, Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those individuals who have answered a divine call to the ministry and who have served with dedication, vigor, and enthusiasm to perform God's work for their congregations and their communities; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Richard Douglas "Dick" DeMerchant is one such stalwart servant of the Lord who has faithfully served as the Associate Pastor of First Baptist Church in Lenoir City, Tennessee, for thirty-five years; and

WHEREAS, ordained at Calvary Baptist Church in Columbus, Georgia, on January 19, 1975, Pastor Richard DeMerchant received his Master of Divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and his Doctor of Divinity degree from the Southern Baptist School for Biblical Studies; and

WHEREAS, Pastor DeMerchant's ministerial career began at Clearview Baptist Church in Saint Petersburg, Florida, where he served as the Minister of Youth until 1974, when he accepted the position of Associate Pastor at Calvary Baptist Church in Columbus, Georgia; and

WHEREAS, since 1979, Pastor Dick DeMerchant has served with reverence and piety as the Associate Pastor of First Baptist Church of Lenoir City, Tennessee, in which capacity he has earned the respect and admiration of the congregation; and

WHEREAS, a faithful member of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, Pastor DeMerchant is a Board Member of the Children's Home, a Member of the Committee on Arrangements, and a Coordinator for the Disaster Relief Teams; and

WHEREAS, a certified instructor in numerous programs for the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, Pastor Dick DeMerchant has traveled on mission trips to most of the forty-eight contiguous states, along with Alaska and Hawaii, as well as Antigua, the Bahamas, Canada, Mexico, numerous countries in Europe, the Middle East, South America, and the West Indies; and

WHEREAS, active in his local community, he has served as a Chaplain for the Lenoir City Council, Fort Loudon Regional Hospital, area assisted-living/nursing home facilities, and the city and county law enforcement agencies and fire departments of Loudon County; and

WHEREAS, the co-host for seven years of the St. Jude Radiothon in Lenoir City, Pastor Dick DeMerchant also organized the Good Samaritan Community Center and the Office on Aging in Loudon County; and

WHEREAS, active with local youth sports, he has served as an organizer and coach for local basketball, soccer, and softball teams and as the President of the Lenoir City High School Basketball Booster Club; and

WHEREAS, Pastor DeMerchant is also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavors to remain true to family values of the highest order. For forty-two years, he has enjoyed the loving companionship of his wife, Della Burlock DeMerchant, and they are the proud parents of Richard Lance DeMerchant, Aaron Douglas DeMerchant, and Sara Elizabeth DeMerchant Quarin; and

WHEREAS, the members of this legislative body are delighted to join in honoring this committed Christian and dynamic leader in the realm of the church and civic life who serves as an eminent citizen of Tennessee and of his community; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby congratulate Pastor Richard Douglas DeMerchant on the celebration of his thirty-fifth anniversary as the Associate Pastor at First Baptist Church in Lenoir City, Tennessee and extend to him our best wishes for his every future success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.