

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1335

By Rudd

A RESOLUTION to recognize Franklin Road Baptist Church on the occasion of its seventieth anniversary.

WHEREAS, the churches of our nation have been an integral part of our history as a people and have had an unparalleled impact in forming and maintaining a stable and just society; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that we should recognize those venerable religious institutions and their congregations that, through their unflagging capacity for love, dedication of spirit, and faith in God, strive to enrich the lives of people in their communities; and

WHEREAS, one such dynamic community of faith is Franklin Road Baptist Church, whose members will celebrate the church's seventieth anniversary this year; and

WHEREAS, on July 18, 1954, a group of Christians met in the old, abandoned, one-room schoolhouse on Kingwood Lane to organize a Baptist church on the west side of Murfreesboro; and

WHEREAS, after meeting in the schoolhouse for approximately one year, the county sold the schoolhouse, and the congregation purchased two acres on Franklin Road, thereafter becoming Franklin Road Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, the church's original concrete block building was completed in 1955, and in 1960, an auditorium was constructed twenty-five feet away from the initial building; the two buildings were joined in 1964, and restrooms, a nursery, and a baptistry were added; and

WHEREAS, Franklin Road Baptist Church started a bus ministry in 1963, and the first bus, known as "The Old Blue Goose," was donated to the church and repaired by the first bus captain; and

WHEREAS, with increased attendance, the church soon outgrew its building, and in 1967, an additional five acres of adjacent land were purchased and a 500-seat auditorium erected; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Bob Kelley was called to pastor the church in 1969, and with an active, soul-winning ministry, bus ministry, and mission program, Franklin Road Baptist Church began to grow substantially; and

WHEREAS, on October 31, 1970, Franklin Road Baptist Church burned to the ground, and despite adversity, the congregation began making plans to rebuild and attended services off-site for a month; in the meantime, a small metal building was built on the church's property for services; and

WHEREAS, the church's new building was completed in 1972, and attendance grew from 230 to nearly 600 people. During this time, church leaders decided to pursue the idea of establishing a Christian school, and in 1974, Franklin Road Christian School opened its doors with 125 students in attendance; and

WHEREAS, on Christmas Day in 1975, Franklin Road Baptist Church was once again destroyed by fire, and church services were held in the school gymnasium; and

WHEREAS, while plans were made to rebuild the building, the church began to search for a new pastor; leaders sought the advice of other pastors, and the deacons eventually asked Brother Bob Kelley if he would be willing to return, to which he accepted after prayerful consideration; and

WHEREAS, Brother Kelley resigned in 1991 following health complications, and Dr. Tom Wallace was called on to become pastor at Franklin Road Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, as Franklin Road Baptist Church continued to grow, a 14,000-square-foot education building was added to the existing church auditorium in 1995; and

WHEREAS, on January 1, 1999, Dr. Mike Norris was asked to serve as pastor, and under his direction, Franklin Road Baptist Church grew to its largest point in history in both attendance and property; in 2009, the church completed construction on its newest building project, which featured state-of-the-art nurseries, an exquisite lobby for the future auditorium, a bookstore, a coffee shop, and the high school portion of Franklin Road Christian School; and

WHEREAS, additionally, Pastor Mike Norris was known to encourage his members to share the Gospel with others through weekly outreach programs, the worldwide mission program, and the Bible printing ministry; and

WHEREAS, presently, Pastor Norris is leading the church through a multi-million-dollar campus expansion, known as Vision 20/20; the project consists of a new education expansion, a new auditorium, and a debt retirement plan to prepare Franklin Road Baptist Church to minister to future generations; and

WHEREAS, throughout its rich seventy-year history, Franklin Road Baptist Church has provided ministry and spiritual leadership in both the Murfreesboro community and around the world, and it continues to be a nationwide leader among Independent Baptist Churches; and

WHEREAS, since its beginnings in 1974, Franklin Road Christian School has become a highly regarded institution and has experienced phenomenal growth; and

WHEREAS, Franklin Road Baptist Church has stood on the rock-solid foundation of Christian belief, service, and love for seventy years, serving as a bastion of faith and outreach to the people of its community; and

WHEREAS, Franklin Road Baptist Church is truly one of the great religious institutions and catalysts for positive spiritual change in our State and nation, and the members of this exceptional congregation should be appropriately honored for their exemplary service to their fellow Christians and to the good people of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we join in the celebration of the seventieth anniversary of Franklin Road Baptist Church, thank the good people of this congregation and their ministers for their notable service to their Lord and the State of Tennessee, and wish them much continued success and happiness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.