

1 State of Arkansas
2 91st General Assembly
3 Fiscal Session, 2018

HMR 1002

4
5 By: Representatives V. Flowers, F. Allen, E. Armstrong, Blake, K. Ferguson, Fielding, M. Hodges, Love,
6 G. McGill, Murdock, Nicks, Walker

7
8 **HOUSE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION**

9 IN RESPECTFUL MEMORY OF DR. ROBERT J. SMITH AND IN
10 RECOGNITION OF HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIETY.

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13 **Subtitle**

14 IN RESPECTFUL MEMORY OF DR. ROBERT J.
15 SMITH AND IN RECOGNITION OF HIS
16 CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIETY.

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18
19 WHEREAS, Dr. Robert J. Smith, born in Hayti, Missouri, to T.J. and
20 Annie Smith, died on February 12, 2018, at the age of eighty-eight (88)
21 years; and

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23 WHEREAS, Dr. Smith graduated from his high school as valedictorian and
24 matriculated at and graduated from Southern Illinois University; and

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26 WHEREAS, in 1951 he was accepted into the University of Missouri
27 Medical School, a time when there were no other African-American graduates of
28 the school's medical program; and

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30 WHEREAS, Dr. Smith earned his diploma, making him the first African-
31 American graduate of the then two-year curriculum; and

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33 WHEREAS, Dr. Smith then transferred to Meharry Medical College in
34 Nashville, Tennessee, where he finished his medical degree in 1955; and

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36 WHEREAS, while in Nashville he was so inspired by the African-American



1 doctors and students whom he met there, as well as by the work of Dr. Martin
2 Luther King Jr., that he made the bold choice to stay in the South during the
3 civil rights movement; and

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5 WHEREAS, in 1966 he moved to the small town of Pine Bluff, Arkansas,
6 where he began a practice, married, and started a family; and

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8 WHEREAS, while in Pine Bluff, he became a leading activist throughout
9 the city and within the state, speaking on behalf of disenfranchised African-
10 American Arkansans who were underrepresented politically, socially, and
11 civically; and

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13 WHEREAS, Dr. Smith relocated to Murfreesboro, Tennessee, where he
14 served as chief of surgery at the Veterans Administration hospital for
15 several years; and

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17 WHEREAS, in 1989 he and his wife, the late Dorothy J. Smith, moved to
18 Memphis, Tennessee, where he became a prominent member of the community,
19 involved himself in the campaigns of several politicians, held numerous
20 professional memberships, wrote more than twenty (20) published articles, and
21 was a devoted member of Whitehaven Middle Baptist Church for over thirty (30)
22 years; and

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24 WHEREAS, Dr. Smith will be remembered by his colleagues, patients, and
25 friends for his scholarship, competence, and compassion,

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27 NOW THEREFORE,

28 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-FIRST GENERAL
29 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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31 THAT the House of Representatives remember and commend Dr. Robert J.
32 Smith for his contributions to society.

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34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the individual members of the House of
35 Representatives hereby express sincere condolences to the family of Dr.
36 Smith, and upon adoption of this resolution, that an appropriate copy be

1 provided to the family of Dr. Smith by the Chief Clerk of the House of
2 Representatives.

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