



# State of Tennessee

## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 799

By Senator Ford

and

Representative Lois DeBerry

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Erma Lee Laws of Memphis.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the death of Erma Lee Laws; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Laws was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for her fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, Erma Laws served with acumen and alacrity as an educator in the Memphis City School System and as a journalist for many years, in which positions she earned the respect of her colleagues and the community alike for the exemplary quality of her work; and

WHEREAS, as the longtime society editor of the *Tri-State Defender*, Ms. Laws gave much-needed attention to important black social events and promoted local figures in business and politics, such as United States Representative Harold Ford, Sr., and other members of the Ford political family; and

WHEREAS, Erma Laws was an active member of the black community, serving as a member of the Memphis Black Society; a board member of the National Civil Rights Museum; the head of the Cotillion Club for Black Girls, known as the Coettes; the co-founder of JUGS, Inc.; and a founding member of Memphis Girl Friends; and

WHEREAS, she was also appointed to the Memphis and Shelby County Public Library and Information Center board of trustees by Mayor Dick Hackett; and

WHEREAS, a devout Catholic throughout her life, Ms. Laws was a member of St. Augustine Catholic Church and authored the Tennessee Historical Commission marker commemorating the life of the late Bishop James Lyke, the first black Catholic priest in Tennessee and parish priest at St. Augustine from 1966-1977; and

WHEREAS, a highly respected figure in the lives of many Memphians, she will be greatly missed by the community she faithfully served throughout her life; and

WHEREAS, Erma Laws leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Erma Lee Laws, reflecting fondly upon her impeccable character and her stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

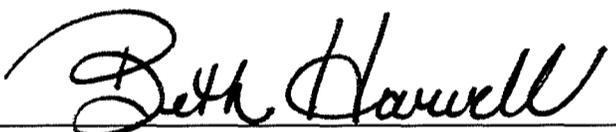
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the friends and loved ones of Ms. Laws.

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

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ADOPTED: April 24, 2012

  
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RON RAMSEY  
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE

  
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BETH HARWELL, SPEAKER  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APPROVED this 18 day of May 2012

  
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BILL HASLAM, GOVERNOR