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RULES & ADMINISTRATION

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1 SENATE RESOLUTION NO.

2 BY SHEARER

3 A Resolution honoring James Samuel Thomas, former
4 bishop of the Iowa United Methodist Church.

5 WHEREAS, James Samuel Thomas began his Christian
6 service as an ordained minister and elder in the
7 Methodist Church of South Carolina, served various
8 churches as pastor, was a university chaplain, was a
9 seminary professor at Southern Methodist University in
10 Dallas, Texas, and later was a visiting professor of
11 sociology at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa; and

12 WHEREAS, in the early 1960s, the United States was
13 engaged in an intense struggle over civil rights for
14 all citizens, and during this time of unrest the
15 northern and southern conferences of the Methodist
16 Church held ecumenical discussions which led to
17 merging the predominantly white and black church
18 congregations; and

19 WHEREAS, in 1964, at the age of 45, the Reverend
20 Dr. Thomas was ordained as the youngest bishop ever to
21 serve Methodism, and the Iowa Conference of the
22 Methodist Church extended its hand of welcome to Dr.
23 James S. Thomas, who became the first black bishop of
24 the North Central Region of the Methodist Church when
25 he was elected to serve the Iowa Area by the North
26 Central Jurisdictional Conference in Cleveland, Ohio,
27 on July 11, 1964; and

28 WHEREAS, at the same session, the North Central
29 Jurisdictional Conference of the Methodist Church
30 ended the church's practice of segregation among its

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1 17 jurisdictions by a vote of 370 to 0; and
2 WHEREAS, the appointment of Bishop James S. Thomas
3 to Iowa was characterized at the time as "an epoch in
4 our nation's advance in human relations", and through
5 his example of leadership and Christian ministry,
6 Bishop Thomas presided over the Methodist
7 congregations of Iowa for 12 years; and

8 WHEREAS, during the tenure of Bishop James S.
9 Thomas in Iowa, and with credit to the leadership of
10 Bishop Thomas, the Methodists merged with the
11 Evangelical United Brethren congregations in 1968 to
12 become the United Methodist Church; NOW THEREFORE,

13 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE, That the Senate
14 extends its thanks and congratulations to Bishop James
15 S. Thomas and his family for their service to the
16 United Methodist Church and to the State of Iowa, and
17 acknowledges the work of Bishop James S. Thomas for
18 the advancement of civil rights in Iowa and in the
19 nation.

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an official copy of
21 this Resolution be prepared for presentation to Bishop
22 James S. Thomas and be delivered to the Bishop on the
23 event of his birthday on April 8, 2002.

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