

2015-J4583

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commending Professor Lilton Mitchell upon the occasion of his designation for special recognition by the Bethel Baptist Church

WHEREAS, The character and richness of religious and community life in this noble Empire State is nourished and fulfilled through the faithful concern and selfless devotion of those who would commit their energies and purpose to the ministry of others; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to bring full recognition and just tribute to those individuals who distinguish themselves and the ministry through their unremitting commitment and preeminence of service; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Professor Lilton Mitchell upon the occasion of his designation for special recognition by the Bethel Baptist Church at a Tribute on Saturday, April 9, 2016, and at a Roast on Sunday, April 10, 2016, at the Bethel Baptist Church in Brooklyn, New York; and

WHEREAS, Lilton Mitchell, fondly known to most as Dickie Mitchell, was born in Baltimore, Maryland; after finishing high school, his family moved to Pasadena, California; and

WHEREAS, While a resident of California, Lilton Mitchell attended Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama, majoring in Organic Chemistry; he also attended the University of California in Los Angeles as an English/History major and, later studied Political Science at Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland; and

WHEREAS, In 1949, Professor Lilton Mitchell received a call from his uncle, the late Joe Bostic in New York City, to come and assist him in the promotion of the First Gospel Concert to be held in Carnegie Hall; the presentation featured renowned gospel singer, Mahalia Jackson and

other great gospel stars such as the Clara Ward Singers, the Davis Sisters, the Dixie Hummingbirds, the Five Blind Boys and the Roberta Martin Singers; and

WHEREAS, Professor Lilton Mitchell soon began promoting a series of mammoth gospel presentations that took place not only in Carnegie Hall, but also in Madison Square Garden, Randall's Island Stadium, the Coliseum, the Philadelphia Met Theatre, the Savoy Ballroom and numerous music halls throughout the Northeast; and

WHEREAS, In addition to the concerts, Professor Lilton Mitchell became a fixture on the "Joe Bostic Gospel Train," a daily radio program that became the hallmark for good gospel music radio in the New York area; his organ playing on the radio, and the subsequent television show, was a familiar and vital part of the overall presentation and the exposure which enabled him to meet and work with Mahalia Jackson, one of the greatest names in traditional gospel music; and

WHEREAS, While on tour, Professor Lilton Mitchell played for Mahalia Jackson at Yale University, the Concert Hall in Boston, the Newport Jazz Festival, the Place des Arts in Montreal, Quebec, and Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C.; in addition, he accompanied her on the organ when she sang at the Martin Luther King Jr. "March on Washington"; and

WHEREAS, After serving his country as a member of the United States Armed Forces in the early 1950s, Professor Lilton Mitchell returned to the New York area and became the organist at the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Newark, New Jersey, where he worked with the Banks Brothers, Professor Alex Bradford and Leon Lumpkins of the Gospel Clefs; and

WHEREAS, In 1968, Professor Lilton Mitchell became the Minister of Music at the Bethel Baptist Church in Brooklyn, New York, which is known

for being the second black church in the borough of Brooklyn that was built by blacks from the ground up; and

WHEREAS, Professor Lilton Mitchell worked at the Bethel Daycare Center for over 37 years as Vice President, President and Secretary and was

employed by the late Reverend W. J. Hall, the Senior Pastor of Bethel Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, In 2005, Professor Lilton Mitchell was retained by the late Reverend Dr. H. DeVore Chapman and became the Senior Pastor of Bethel Baptist Church; he retired under the leadership of newly installed Pastor, Reverend C. Ramont Morris, on Saturday, January 16, 2016; and

WHEREAS, On January 1, 2016, Professor Lilton Mitchell celebrated his 48th year as the Minister of Music at Bethel Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, With him throughout have been his wife, Sandra, their three children, Denise (Rodney) Harrison, Keith and Kyle, and two grandchildren, Derin and Kazmier, all of whom feel privileged to be a part of his life and rejoice in his achievements; and

WHEREAS, Professor Lilton Mitchell has brought to his ministry an overwhelming spirit of charity and compassion, acting from vision and enlightenment in conducting his musical and spiritual duties, while always displaying the highest standards of personal and professional integrity and dedication; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when a person of such noble aims and accomplishments is brought to our attention it is appropriate to publicly and jubilantly proclaim and commend that individual for the edification of others; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Professor Lilton Mitchell upon the occasion of his designation for special recognition by the Bethel Baptist Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Professor Lilton Mitchell.