

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 147

By Crowe

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Mary Adeline Henderson Alexander of Johnson City.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Mary Adeline Henderson Alexander; and

WHEREAS, Mary Alexander 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, born in Johnson City on March 23, 1946, Ms. Alexander was the daughter of Mary Louise Jackson and Orville "Slim" Horton; she was educated in Johnson City's segregated schools at Dunbar Elementary and graduated from her beloved Langston High School in 1963; and

WHEREAS, Mary Alexander received her Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees in History with an emphasis on African-American Studies from East Tennessee State University; her dissertation was *The Black Churches and Their Impact on the Black Community in the Segregated Johnson City of the 1950s*; and

WHEREAS, for a number of years, she served with acumen and alacrity as an employee of the Johnson City Housing Authority, and she served as director of South Central Kingsport Community Development; she also taught at East Tennessee State University and Northeast State Community College and was a substitute teacher in Johnson City Schools; and

WHEREAS, one of the founders of The Langston Heritage Group, Mary Alexander was a passionate community activist who worked tirelessly to establish several state historical markers, including a plaque at the Dr. Hezekiah Hankal Building at the Washington County-Johnson City Health Department and a fountain at East Tennessee State University honoring

integration; she also participated in restoration fundraising efforts for the West Lawn Cemetery; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Alexander represented the Fourth District on the Washington County Commission; she also served on the Johnson City Planning Commission, the Washington County Board of Mayor and Alderman, and the Washington County Election Commission; and

WHEREAS, Mary Alexander was a dedicated and active member of Bethel Christian Church in Jonesborough and Friendship Baptist Church in Johnson City, and she was a founding member of New Jerusalem Baptist Church in Johnson City, where she was known as the "Mother of the Church"; she served as a Sunday School teacher, choir member, usher board member, and dedicated student of the Word; and

WHEREAS, she was also deeply devoted to her family, and she always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Mary Alexander was the proud mother of Alan Jerome Alexander and William Ernest Alexander, Jr.; the devoted grandmother of Ebony Alexander, Alan B. Alexander, Jordan Chillee Carson, Ayanna Alexander, and Quinton Alexander; and the treasured great-grandmother of seven great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, she is lovingly remembered by her brother, James Nathan Henderson; her stepdaughter, Connie Stephens; her beloved nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews, great-great-nieces, and great-great-nephews; and her special longtime friends, Starlett Jean Rhea Benson Williams, Maxine Dabner Johnson, and Angela Wood Fritz; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Alexander was preceded in death by her parents; her brother, Edward Lewis Williams, Jr.; and her sister, Mable Inez Williams Gaspie; and

WHEREAS, Mary Alexander 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 the members of 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 ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Mary Adeline Henderson Alexander, 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 family of Ms. Alexander.

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