

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 396

In Memory  
of  
Thomas Jefferson Payne

**WHEREAS**, The Senate of the State of Texas honors and commemorates the life of Dr. Thomas Jefferson Payne, who died March 30, 2023, at the age of 87; and

**WHEREAS**, The son of James Payne and Vivian Smith Payne, Thomas Payne was born in Marlin on October 21, 1935; he accepted his call to the ministry in 1973 and enrolled in the Christian ministry degree program at the Southern Bible Institute in Dallas, and he graduated with honors in 1976; he preached his first sermon at Mount Horeb Missionary Baptist Church in Reagor Springs on October 7, 1973, and in 1976, he was called to pastor the Samaria Baptist Church in Kerens, Texas, where he served through 1981; and

**WHEREAS**, A distinguished scholar and a devoted spiritual servant, Thomas further pursued studies in theology at Dallas Bible College and Dallas Baptist University from 1986 through 1989; and

**WHEREAS**, Pastor Payne co-founded the Pearly Gate Baptist Church on December 17, 1981, and he ministered faithfully to the physical and spiritual needs of his congregation until his retirement in 2016; under Pastor Payne's outstanding leadership, the church grew dramatically from its original congregation of 22 to its current membership of over 3,000, and it has provided enlightenment, hope, and support to the Dallas community for more than 40 years; and

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Payne had a distinguished 34-year career with LTV Corporation from 1954 to 1988; he held an honorary doctorate in humanities from the Southern Bible Institute, and he received the Dr. Milton K. Curry Jr. Education Award in 2014; a treasured leader in his community, Dr. Payne served as executive board treasurer of Southern Bible Institute and as the revival chairman of the Oak Cliff Baptist Minister's Union; and

**WHEREAS**, Pastor Payne shared 47 devoted years of marriage with the late Geraldine Payne; he was blessed once again to find love with Sandra Fay Buckley, whom he married in 2006; a loving husband, father, and grandfather, Pastor Payne greatly cherished his 12 children, his 29 grandchildren, and his 36 great-grandchildren; and

**WHEREAS**, A revered spiritual leader and counselor and an esteemed member of the Dallas community, Dr. Thomas Payne inspired countless congregates and colleagues as a mentor, pastor, and friend, and he will long be remembered with deep respect and admiration by all who were privileged to share in his life; now, therefore, be it

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**RESOLVED**, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 88th Legislature, hereby extend sincere condolences to the bereaved family of Dr. Thomas Jefferson Payne; and, be it further

**RESOLVED**, That a copy of this Resolution be prepared for his family as an expression of deepest sympathy from the Texas Senate and that when the Senate adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Dr. Thomas Payne.

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President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on April 11, 2023, by a rising vote.

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Secretary of the Senate

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Member, Texas Senate