

By: Workman

H.R. No. 908

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, Countless lives were touched by the commitment and  
2 compassion of Dr. Ralph M. Smith of Austin, who passed away on March  
3 11, 2017, at the age of 85; and

4           WHEREAS, Born on March 19, 1931, Ralph Smith grew up in Hot  
5 Springs, Arkansas; he married the former Bess Noble in 1951, and the  
6 couple shared a rewarding marriage that spanned 56 years before  
7 Mrs. Smith's passing in 2008; they became the parents of three  
8 children, Diane, Wallace, and Peyton, and in later years, the  
9 family grew to include seven grandchildren and three  
10 great-grandchildren; and

11           WHEREAS, Dr. Smith completed his doctoral degree in theology  
12 at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and served as pastor  
13 of First Baptist Church in Rosenberg before becoming pastor of Hyde  
14 Park Baptist Church in Austin; his uplifting, beautifully crafted  
15 sermons provided inspiration to all who heard them, and over the 36  
16 years that he led the Hyde Park congregation, membership increased  
17 from about 1,000 to more than 12,000; this dedicated leader also  
18 established the Hyde Park Baptist Foundation as an endowment to  
19 support church ministries; and

20           WHEREAS, Highly respected by his peers, Dr. Smith helped  
21 establish 16 churches, served on the founding executive committee  
22 of Austin Baptist Church, and oversaw the construction of numerous  
23 buildings for Baptist organizations; in addition, he served as  
24 president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the

1 Southern Baptist Convention Pastor's Conference, and he was a  
2 regent of Baylor University and chair of the Southwestern Baptist  
3 Theological Seminary board of trustees; and

4 WHEREAS, Dr. Smith retired in 1996, after he was stricken by  
5 Guillain-Barre syndrome, and following 17 months of  
6 hospitalization and rehabilitation, he published the book *You Can't*  
7 *Fall off the Floor* to offer encouragement and hope to other  
8 sufferers; he also published three other titles in his lifetime,  
9 and he continued to mentor younger pastors and provide spiritual  
10 guidance to those in need until the final years of his life; and

11 WHEREAS, Warm, engaging, and quick to smile, Ralph Smith  
12 conveyed a joyful message of unwavering faith, and he will forever  
13 hold a special place in the hearts of those he left behind; now,  
14 therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 85th Texas  
16 Legislature hereby pay tribute to Dr. Ralph Smith and extend  
17 sincere condolences to all who mourn his passing; and, be it further

18 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
19 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of  
20 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Dr. Smith.