



Tennessee Senate

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CLERK

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, we were greatly saddened to learn of the untimely and tragic passing of native Memphian Reverend Dr. Autura Eason-Williams, a humble servant of God and a beloved leader; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Eason-Williams was a graduate of the University of Memphis and Memphis Theological Seminary; she completed a Doctor of Ministry degree at Wesley Seminary in Washington, D.C., in May 2020; and

WHEREAS, a lifelong Methodist, she accepted the call to full-time ministry in 1997 and served under appointment in the United Methodist Church beginning in 2002; she was commissioned provisional elder in 2003 and ordained elder in 2006; and

WHEREAS, her appointment history included service with Centenary United Methodist Church and Calvary Longview United Methodist Church and service as Associate Director of Connectional Ministries; she also led Christian Education and Age-Level Ministry; she navigated a cross-racial appointment as an early pioneer in that work in the legacy Memphis Conference, and she was elected by her peers to lead the clergy delegation to the General Conference and endorsed as a candidate for Bishop prior to the anticipated 2020 General Conference; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Eason-Williams served as the pastor of Capleville United Methodist Church, a multi-ethnic church in Southeast Memphis for twelve years; during her tenure at Capleville, the church became a neighbor to the Southeast Shelby County community through several community outreach programs, including senior activities, a multi-generational computer and coding ministry, English as a Second Language classes, outreach to neighborhood schools, a community food pantry, and an apartment ministry; she also served Calvary Longview and Centenary United Methodist churches and led those churches in similar community outreach; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Eason-Williams served on the boards of a number of organizations, including Wesley Senior Ministries, Lakeshore, Wesley Foundation University of Memphis, Hannah's Hope, United Methodist Neighborhood Centers, New Church Development, and District Committee on Ministry; she led youth camps, fall and spring retreats, confirmation retreats, district and conference UMW retreats, Church Women United, and Key Women events, and she preached for local church, district, and conference events; and

WHEREAS, in addition to her pastoral duties, Reverend Dr. Autura Eason-Williams served as chair of the Memphis Conference Board of Ordained Ministry and a member of the Memphis Conference Black Methodists for Church Renewal; she served many years with Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare as a member of the Faith and Health Committee and on the planning committees that created My Sister's Keeper, an outreach that addresses health disparities among African-American women, and The Congregational Health Network, an ecumenical network of 600 churches that addresses health disparities and builds relationships between the hospital, the faith community, and the neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, at the time of her passing, Reverend Dr. Eason-Williams was the district superintendent of the Metro District of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of the United Methodist Church; during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, she was invited to join the conference's appointive cabinet and was in the process of becoming one of the most gifted district superintendents the conference had seen; and

WHEREAS, two of the ministries she led for the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference were the Signposts Seminars, a covenant discipleship opportunity for lay people and clergy to support one another while exploring God's dream for an anti-racist, anti-oppressive world, and the #BeUMC campaign, an effort to highlight the positive aspects of being the United Methodist Church; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Eason-Williams's most powerful ministry was her ministry of encouragement, especially toward female clergy; and

WHEREAS, an active member of her community, Reverend Dr. Eason-Williams served as a founding board member of the Center for Transforming Communities and of Us Making it Happen Shalom Zone; 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, she is survived by her husband, Darrell Eason-Williams, and four children, Ayanna, John, Terence, and Gwendolyn; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Eason-Williams 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 we remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

SHELBY COUNTY GOVERNMENT
SHELBY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
 Shelby County, Tennessee
 Honorable Willie F. Brooks, Jr., Chairman



Commissioner Amber Mills
 Commissioner David C. Bradford
 Commissioner Mick Wright
 Commissioner Mark Billingsley
 Commissioner Michael Whaley
 Commissioner Tami Sawyer

Commissioner Mickell Lowery
 Commissioner Edmund Ford, Jr.
 Commissioner Reginald Milton
 Commissioner Eddie S. Jones, Jr.
 Commissioner Van D. Turner, Jr.
 Commissioner Brandon Morrison

A SPECIAL RESOLUTION HONORING AND CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF

“DR. AUTURA EASON-WILLIAMS”

SPONSORED BY: COMMISSIONER TAMI SAWYER

WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Autura Eason-Williams was born June 27, 1970 to Robert Luther Eason and Tommie Dale Reed. Autura graduated from Kirby High School and earned her Bachelor’s degree from the University of Memphis, Master’s degree from Memphis Theological Seminary and Doctor of Ministry from Wesley Theological Seminary; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Autura Eason-Williams answered her call to ministry in 1997 and began her career at her home church Centenary United Methodist Church as a youth minister. She was appointed Senior Pastor at Calvary Longview United Methodist Church and Capleville United Methodist Church before becoming the District Superintendent of the Metro District of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of the United Methodist Church; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Autura Eason-Williams was an active voice against racism and injustice, Dr. Eason-Williams was able to successfully minister, build friendships and working relationships across diverse communities in Memphis and the entire Southeast Jurisdiction. She was an active participant in multiple community groups that were designed to enhance the lives of the underprivileged. She served as a founding board member of the Center for Transforming Communities and of US Making It Happen Shalom Zone, facilitated Formation for Ministry classes at Memphis Theological Seminary, coached for Center for Youth Ministry Training, chaired the advisory committee for Belle Forest Community School, and served as the Chair of the Memphis Conference Board of Ordained Ministry; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Autura Eason-Williams served on a number of boards including Wesley Senior Ministries, Lakeshore, Wesley Foundation University of Memphis, Hannah’s Hope, United Methodist Neighborhood Centers, New Church Development, and District Committee on Ministry. She has led youth camps, Fall and Spring retreats, confirmation retreats, district and conference United Methodist Women retreats, Church Women United and Key Women events and preached for local church, district, and conference events; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Autura Eason-Williams was a daughter, wife, mother, sister, auntie, cousin, friend, mentor and a colleague. She is survived by her husband Darrell Eason-Williams; four children Ayanna, John, Terence Jr. and Gwendolyn; bonus daughters Yakira and India; mother Tommie Dale Reed; three siblings Gwendolyn, Latricia and Thomas; six nieces and nephews Kristin, Eliza, Elena, DeAngelo, Malcolm and Byron Jr.; four great nieces and nephews Torian, Teri-Tess, Kai, and Elliott; and a host of aunts, uncles and cousins. Autura is preceded in death by her father Robert Luther Eason, her grandparents Freddie James and Juanita Eason, Floyd and Gennora Reed, and great niece Tori Black; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Autura Eason-Williams was known to many as an adviser, friend, advocate, and role model. Autura brought a sense of purpose to the lives of many who encountered her. If there was a family member or friend in need, she would provide whatever she could to help anyone. Dr. Autura Eason-Williams was such a beautiful soul whose work and legacy of her stewardship will continue to live on.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF SHELBY COUNTY, TENNESSEE, THAT WE DO HEREBY HONOR AND CELEBRATE THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF DR. AUTURA EASON-WILLIAMS.

In witness thereof, I hereby set my hand and cause the great seal of Shelby County to be affixed, this 1ST day of August, 2022.

WILLIE F. BROOKS, JR., Commissioner
 DISTRICT 6

AMBER MILLS, Commissioner
 District 1

MICKELL LOWERY, Commissioner
 District 8

DAVID C. BRADFORD, Commissioner
 District 2

EDMUND FORD, JR., Commissioner
 District 9

MICK WRIGHT, Commissioner
 District 3

REGINALD MILTON, Commissioner
 District 10

MARK BILLINGSLEY, Commissioner
 District 4

EDDIE JONES, JR., Commissioner
 District 11

MICHAEL WHALEY, Commissioner
 District 5

VAN D. TURNER, JR., Commissioner
 District 12

TAMI SAWYER, Commissioner
 District 7

BRANDON MORRISON, Commissioner
 District 13



I, Randy McNally, Speaker of the Senate of the One Hundred Twelfth General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, in conjunction with the undersigned, do hereby proclaim that we honor the memory of Reverend Dr. Autura Eason-Williams, reflecting fondly upon her impeccable character and her stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction. We express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Reverend Dr. Eason-Williams.

Proclaimed in Nashville, Tennessee, on this the 22nd day of July 2022.



London Lamar, Senator
33rd Senate District



Randy McNally
Speaker of the Senate



Raumes Akbari, Senator
29th Senate District



Heidi Campbell, Senator
20th Senate District



Brenda Gilmore, Senator
19th Senate District



Brian Kelsey, Senator
31st Senate District



Sara Kyle, Senator
30th Senate District



Paul Rose, Senator
32nd Senate District



Jeff Yarbrow, Senator
21st Senate District



Karen Camper, Representative
87th Representative District



Jesse Chism, Representative
85th Representative District



Barbara Cooper, Representative
86th Representative District



John Gillespie, Representative
97th Representative District



G. A. Hardaway, Representative
93rd Representative District



Torrey C. Harris, Representative
90th Representative District



Tom Leatherwood, Representative
99th Representative District



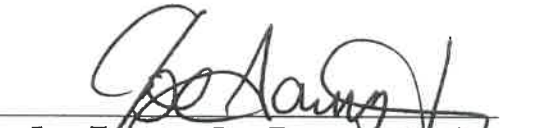
Larry J. Miller, Representative
88th Representative District



Antonio Parkinson, Representative
98th Representative District



Dwayne Thompson, Representative
96th Representative District



Joe Towns, Jr., Representative
84th Representative District



Kevin Vaughan, Representative
95th Representative District



Mark White, Representative
83rd Representative District

