

# 2026 SPECIAL SESSION I

ENROLLED

## HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 2176

*Celebrating the life of the Reverend Ovid Benjamin Sparks III.*

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, June 22, 2026

WHEREAS, the Reverend Ovid Benjamin Sparks III, a faith leader who touched countless lives through his inspirational preaching and visionary community leadership, died on March 28, 2026; and

WHEREAS, born in Fort Worth, Texas, Ovid Benjamin “Ben” Sparks III grew up in Atlanta, Georgia, and spent summers in Springville, Alabama; he gained a lifelong appreciation for the charms of the American South in his youth, but he struggled to reconcile this appreciation with the harsh realities of Jim Crow laws and segregation and was inspired to devote his life to the promotion of equality and service to others; and

WHEREAS, originally intending to pursue a career in medicine, Ben Sparks graduated from Davidson College in North Carolina, but ultimately changed tracks and answered the call to the ministry, enrolling at Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from Union Presbyterian Seminary in 1965, Ben Sparks was ordained as a minister of word and sacraments in the Atlanta Presbytery, then traveled to Scotland, where he served as an assistant minister of St. Serf’s Church in Tullibody and helped rebuild an ancient abbey on the island of Iona; and

WHEREAS, Ben Sparks returned to the United States in 1968 and ministered to communities in Florida, Tennessee, and Virginia, before settling in Richmond to become pastor of Second Presbyterian Church; and

WHEREAS, known for speaking from his heart and speaking the truth, Ben Sparks provided his wise counsel and leadership to a number of civic task forces, committees, and boards, including Richmond Hill and Leadership Metro Richmond, becoming a unifying force for positive change throughout the city; and

WHEREAS, Ben Sparks will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife, Annette; his daughters, Kathryn and Elizabeth, and their families; and numerous other family members and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Delegates hereby note with great sadness the loss of the Reverend Ovid Benjamin Sparks III, a highly admired faith leader in Richmond; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of the Reverend Ovid Benjamin Sparks III as an expression of the House of Delegates’ respect for his memory.

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