

2026 SPECIAL SESSION I

ENROLLED

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 2205

Celebrating the life of the Reverend Ivan T. Harris.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, June 29, 2026

WHEREAS, the Reverend Ivan T. Harris, a beloved spiritual leader, passionate musician, and dedicated teacher and mentor who helped countless individuals grow in faith and better serve their communities, died on June 18, 2026; and

WHEREAS, Ivan Harris was one of five sons born to the late Frank and Beulah Harris; he grew up in Newport News and graduated from George Washington Carver High School, where he was a talented multi-instrumentalist who participated in the school band and orchestra; and

WHEREAS, a graduate of Hampton University, Ivan Harris was employed at Newport News Shipbuilding for 23 years, and he pursued additional education at the Evans-Smith Institute of Church Leadership at Virginia Union University, United Christian College, Trinity Seminary, and Regent University; and

WHEREAS, Ivan Harris began his journey in the ministry as the pastor of Zion Hill Baptist Church for three years, then served as pastor of New Hope Baptist Church for seven years; and

WHEREAS, Ivan Harris subsequently became the longest-serving pastor in the 160-year history of First Baptist Church Denbigh, where he grew the congregation to more than 2,000 members over the course of his 31 years of visionary leadership; and

WHEREAS, Ivan Harris turned First Baptist Church Denbigh into a beacon of hope and fellowship for the community, establishing its Outreach Center to offer housing for women pursuing higher education, distribute food to local families, and provide clothing to those in need; he also served as co-director of the Boys to Men Mentorship Program, which shaped the lives of young men through education, counseling, and character development; and

WHEREAS, in September 2019, Ivan Harris planted Love Christian Church in Newport News, continuing his lifelong mission of evangelism, discipleship, and community development; and

WHEREAS, Ivan Harris held numerous leadership roles in the religious community in Hampton Roads and provided his wise insights to several civic organizations; he was also well-known as a harmonica player who performed at other churches and local events for many years, and released the album *Jesus Saves* in 1995; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his work in the Commonwealth, Ivan Harris was committed to global outreach and adopted a village in Benin, where he championed efforts to provide life-changing resources and opportunities for generations of residents; he worked with other ministers and supporters to oversee the construction of a well, a school, a medical clinic, and a church in the village; and

WHEREAS, Ivan Harris will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his beloved wife of nearly 52 years, Sylvia; his children, Iva, Iris, Ingrid, and Ivan II, 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 Ivan T. Harris, a pastor, musician, and teacher who touched countless lives through his compassion and transformational leadership; 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 Ivan T. Harris as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for his memory.

ENROLLED

HR2205ER