

HONORING ANDERSON UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 12, 2013

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Anderson United Methodist Church Jackson, Mississippi.

Anderson United Methodist Church began as a mission in 1914 under the leadership of local ministers from the Central and Pratt Methodist Episcopal Churches. One of the ministers, the late Rev. R. L. Pickens, then pastor of Central, helped organize the Cloverleaf Methodist Episcopal Mission. During the 1920s, the first group of members met at the home of William Harper on Woodrow Wilson Avenue where they worshiped until a specific location was secured.

By 1928, a temporary house of worship for the Mission had been obtained, an old abandoned store on Whitfield Mill Road, (now Martin Luther King Dr.). In 1936, a lot on Spring Street was purchased, and the first church building was constructed. It was named for the Rev. R. L. Anderson the first conference appointed minister. Rev. Anderson died in 1930. The Rev. I. R. Kersh, Sr., was the pastor at the time Anderson Chapel, as it was known then, was constructed. During the next fifty-five years, the following ministers Pastored Anderson Chapel: Reverends J.C. Bell, Golden Price, S.L. Webb, W.J. Eubanks, N.W. Ross, R.D. Gerald, Whalon Blackmon, T.S. Davis, A.L. Holland, F.P. Leonard, C.P. Payne, H.C. Clay, Sr., and John L. Baker.

In September 1952, under the leadership of Rev. Blackmon, a new structure was built on Page Street and given the name Anderson Memorial. In 1968, under C.P. Payne, Anderson Memorial became Anderson United Methodist Church. In 1972, during the tenure of Rev. Clay, the white and black United Methodist conference merged into one conference. In 1985, Rev. Jeffrey A. Stallworth was appointed pastor at Anderson. It was under his leadership that the church moved to 485 West Northside Drive.

Because of the tremendous growth, Anderson relocated to I-220 at Hanging Moss Road in November, 1994. At this time, membership was over 1,600. After being at this location for only two years, in December 1996 the membership at Anderson surpassed the 3,000 mark.

In June 2002, the Reverend Joe W. May became Pastor of Anderson United Methodist Church. As membership continue to rise, Anderson United Methodist Church works diligently to provide a friendly worship atmosphere.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Anderson United Methodist Church.

IN PRAISE OF DR. THOMAS F.
FREEMAN: EDUCATOR, SCHOLAR,
AND LEGENDARY COACH AND
TEACHER OF THE ART OF DE-
BATE

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 12, 2013

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Dr. Thomas F. Freeman, who for more than 60 years has been a professor of philosophy at Texas Southern University, which is located in my congressional district.

In addition to being an educator and scholar of the first rank, Dr. Freeman is world renowned as the legendary coach and teacher of the art of forensic debate. It is therefore most fitting that he is being honored today in Houston at Texas Southern University Founders Day Convocation.

Dr. Freeman has shaped the lives of countless young people who were his students, including the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the late Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, who once held the seat I now hold. Dr. Freeman's tools were the spoken word. His canvas was the minds of the brilliant and talented young African Americans seeking a higher education.

A prodigy himself, Dr. Freeman graduated from Virginia Union University at the age of 18 and went on to become a professor at Virginia Union University before his 30th birthday. He would later receive degrees from Andover Newton Theological School; Harvard University; Chicago Divinity School; the University of Vienna in Austria, and the University of Liberia in Africa.

In 1949, Dr. Freeman was among a group of accomplished academics of color hired by Texas Southern University (TSU). The same year he held a debate in his TSU logic class using his own undergraduate experience as a guide.

Debate is defined as a contention by words or arguments; or as a formal discussion of a motion before a deliberative body according to the rules of parliamentary procedure; or a regulated discussion of a proposition between two matched sides. But to Dr. Freeman, it was much more than a contest; it was a way of life.

Dr. Freeman understood, as did Socrates when he said to Glaucon in Book X of the Republic that "the contest is great my dear Glaucon, greater than it seems—this contest that concerns becoming good or bad." Dr. Freeman's success was informed by his passionate belief that strong debate skills translated into a range of life skills that would serve students well in their personal lives and professional careers.

Dr. Freeman's academic roots in moral philosophy and theology came through in his instruction of his debate team students. Through the art of debate, Dr. Freeman taught what the ancients Greeks called arete, which is defined as an "activity of the soul in accord with virtue in a complete life." As Aristotle explains in the Nicomachean Ethics, happiness comes from exercising the full range of one's vital powers directed toward excellence.

Virtue and excellence and happiness is what Dr. Freeman taught his students and that is why he and they were special. In 1949, the

TSU students who participated in Dr. Freeman's debate class were so impressed with their experience that they requested that Dr. Freeman to form and coach a team. Dr. Freeman agreed and founded the Texas Southern University debate program which today is world renowned for its skill and for the number of championships won.

Dr. Freeman is internationally known for his debate coaching prowess and for the prominent Americans who studied under his tutelage. Among them are the late Congresswoman Barbara Jordan and the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The debating skills that young Barbara Jordan developed under Dr. Freeman's tutelage were so formidable that she became the first female to travel with the TSU debate team. She and her debate partner Otis King participated in and won many awards, including the championship at Baylor University, the first integrated debate match held in the South.

Barbara Jordan went on to become a Texas State Senator and the first Texas African American woman elected to the House of Representatives from my state. She characterized her experience of learning under his tutelage as having shaped her view of the importance of mastering the skills of debate. Congresswoman Jordan and Dr. Freeman remained close and upon her death he gave the eulogy at her funeral.

Dr. Freeman's skill as a debate coach came to the attention of Denzel Washington when he sought a model for the role of a debate coach for his role in the critically acclaimed film "The Great Debaters," based on life of Melvin B. Tolson, who formed the Wiley College debate team. The Wiley College debate team defeated the University of Southern California (USC) debate team for the 1935 national championship.

One of the students who was a student in Dr. Freeman's class during his tenure as a visiting lecturer at Morehouse University was a young Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. Freeman had such an influential effect on him that years later while Dr. Freeman and a group of students happened to be in the same restaurant as Dr. King he was surprised when Dr. King approached his table to say hello. Dr. King reminded Dr. Freeman that he had been a student in his Morehouse class and explained to the students how much that experience shaped his life.

Dr. Freeman's contributions to the Texas Southern University Community included serving as Founding Dean of both the Weekend College and the Honors College. Dr. Freeman worked with then TSU President Granville M. Sawyer to develop the program and serve as its dean. The Honors College, renamed in his honor as the Thomas F. Freeman Honors College, was developed for academically gifted and motivated students to provide them with the most rigorous and challenging academic regimen.

In 1972, Dr. Freeman was asked by Rice University to join its faculty after it had desegregated. Dr. Freeman began a 23-year career association with Rice University. As near as anyone recalls, he was the first African American professor to teach at this prestigious university before returning to TSU where he resumed teaching and leading the TSU debate team to countless victories.

This weekend TSU will honor Dr. Freeman's 60 years of service, and I join them in recognizing the impact a great teacher can have in