

RESOLUTION NO. 14-662

WHEREAS, the City Council and the Mayor of the City of Huntsville, Alabama, are apprised that a Special Appreciation and Retirement Celebration in honor of their Pastor John Luther Clay will be held at the St. Mark Baptist Church, and a luncheon at Marriott Hotel on September 21, 2014; and,

WHEREAS he will officially retire on December 31, 2014, after 43 years of service (35 at St. Mark Baptist Church and 8 at New Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church), as the pastor of God's people; and,

WHEREAS, thirty-five years of leadership and a life of commitment for Elder John Luther Clay began with the Saint Mark Baptist Church Family when he heeded the calling as pastor in 1979. Elder Clay's Christian work began when he accepted Christ as his savior at the age of sixteen and answered God's call into the ministry at the age of twenty-one at Saint Mark, where he grew up as a child; and;

WHEREAS, Pastor Clay is the eighth of nine children and youngest of two sons born to the late Theodore Roosevelt and Frances Rice Clay. He is a product of the public schools of Madison County, a graduate of Councill Training High School, and an alumnus of Alabama A&M University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Mathematics. He holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Theology from the American Baptist Seminary in Nashville, Tennessee and was awarded an Honorary Doctorate Degree from Huntsville Bible College. He is a retired employee of the U. S. Army Missile Command at Redstone Arsenal, where he worked for more than 26 years. Rev. Clay is also the recipient of the Greater Huntsville Interdenominational Ministerial Fellowship 2004 Martin Luther King Humanitarian Award, the recipient of the 2010 Auburn Agricultural Small Farmers Award, and President of Huntsville Bible College; and,

WHEREAS, thirty-four years ago, God sent a pastor and a spiritual "Teacher and Leader". He has led this body of faith to grow numerically, spiritually, and in other dimensions. At Saint Mark, he has established strong teaching and training programs for leaders and members; made renovations for classrooms and added a new educational wing; and led the Church into building plans for the 2000s. Through his leadership, Education Retreats; Training Programs for New Members, Deacons and Mothers; a Mission and Outreach Ministry; a Witnessing Crusade; a Bus Ministry; a Big Brothers/Big Sisters Mentoring Program; a Brotherhood Auxiliary; a Children's Choir; a Children's Church; a Prison Ministry; a Nursing Home Ministry; a Singles' and Couples' Ministry; the Young Adult Ministry; Youth Programs; and the Child Development Center were established. The foresight of Pastor Clay led the church to hire its first assistant pastor, youth minister and daytime custodian and erect its million plus dollar sanctuary and renovate the old one for classrooms; and,

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Pastor John Luther Clay

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WHEREAS, Pastor Clay has directed the Mallard Creek Primitive Baptist School of Religion; instructor for the National Primitive Baptist Convention; and is the founder and President of the Huntsville Bible College. While serving as Moderator of the Mallard Creek Primitive Baptist Association, new classrooms, restrooms, kitchen and a fellowship hall were erected and programs established at the Syler Tabernacle. He has led Huntsville Bible College for the past twenty-six years to Accredited Status with the Commission on Accreditation for Biblical Higher Education offering certificates, associates, bachelors and masters degree; to purchase over five acres of land, and to purchase and renovate a new building for the College and to purchase additional land for parking. He served as Pastor of the New Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church for nine years; Past President of the Greater Huntsville Interdenominational Ministerial Fellowship; Moderator of Flint River Missionary Baptist Association; four-four year terms as Moderator of the Mallard Creek Primitive Baptist Association of Churches; Board Member of Directors for Rural Senior Services; and is a participant in the U. S. Department of Agricultural Natural Resource Environmental Program; and,

WHEREAS, Pastor Clay has been married to Lura Parker Clay for 48 years; and they have three children Cedric, Sonya, and Cyrus; and three grandchildren Shaqoya, Adrienna and McKenzie.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council and Mayor of the City of Huntsville, Alabama, express their congratulations and best wishes to Pastor John Luther Clay upon his retirement, with 35 years of faithful service and leadership to the St. Mark Baptist Church and the citizens of Huntsville.

ADOPTED this the 11th day of September, 2014.

President of the City Council of
the City of Huntsville, Alabama

APPROVED this the 11th day of September, 2014.

Mayor of the City of Huntsville,
Alabama