

# In Memoriam



## *Jane Castor, Mayor*

**WHEREAS**, the City of Tampa takes pride in recognizing those individuals whose commitment and dedication have made a lasting impact on our community and nation, and one of these individuals was **The Honorable T. (Thomas) Terrell Sessums**, a well-respected Public Servant and Attorney who passed away on Saturday, June 6, 2020, at the age of 89; and

**WHEREAS**, Representative Sessums, a Florida native, was born on June 11, 1930 in Daytona Beach and attended high school in Jacksonville, and thereafter made Tampa his home. He served his country as a Captain in the United States Air Force, and attended the University of Florida (UF) earning his Bachelor's Degree and Juris Doctorate and he served as Student Body President, was a member of Florida Blue Key and Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity, and was a Southern Debate Team Champion. Over the years, he was awarded honorary doctorate degrees from the University of South Florida (USF), Flagler College, Florida Southern College and Rollins College; and

**WHEREAS**, Representative Sessums was admitted to the Florida Bar in 1958, and he began a stellar legal career including with several prestigious law firms, as Legislative Aide to Florida Senator Sam Gibbons, as a Political Science Adjunct Professor at USF, Special Counsel to the United States Senate, General Counsel for the Tampa Port Authority for fourteen years, and the last seventeen years of his career with the Salem Law Group; and

**WHEREAS**, devoted to serving, and an strong advocate for equality and fair education, Representative Sessums was elected to the Florida House of Representatives in 1963, and his legacy includes among many accomplishments, serving as Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, the establishment of the Tampa Sports Authority (TSA), the Museum of Science and Industry (MOSI), the Florida State Fair Authority, the Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority, the University of South Florida Colleges of Medicine and Nursing, the Educational Equalization Act, the Hillsborough County Environmental Protection Agency, USF expansions, and he authored the Florida Education Finance Program; and

**WHEREAS**, Representative Sessums was deeply committed to the community including through his leadership within the TSA, MOSI, The Arts Council, Moffitt Cancer Center, and the USF Foundation where he was a member of its Presidents Council; he was Chairman for many organizations including the Florida Board of Regents, and on the Board of Trustees for the University of Tampa and Florida Southern College, and he was a proud member of the United Methodist Colleges and Universities National Board, and more. He received many well deserved accolades over the years including *Lifetime Achievement Awards* from the Florida Association of Colleges and Universities, the League of Women Voters of Hillsborough County and the Tiger Bay Club, the UF's *Distinguished Alumni Award*, and the Tampa Bay Environmental Excellence Award, Terrell Sessums Elementary School, and USF's Terrell Sessums Mall are all named in his honor for his vast contributions to our community and education; and

**WHEREAS**, well known as a bridge builder and for his integrity, dignity, and strong ethical standards, Representative Sessums will forever be remembered for his deep love of his family and friends, for leading a giving and honorable life, his passion for equitable education, and his lifetime of dedication to making a difference.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Jane Castor, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the city of Tampa, Florida, do hereby urge all citizens to join me in publicly expressing sorrow and heartfelt appreciation to the Thomas Terrell Sessums Family, his sons Tom and Richard, his daughter Sandra, Grandchildren, and other family members, and to express our hopes that they will take solace in their cherished memories and the considerable impact of his life on our community, state, and nation.

Dated in Tampa, Florida, this 10<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2020.

*City of*  
**Tampa**  
Florida

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Mayor