

Appendix R-3

Presbytery of St. Augustine Memorial Resolution Eriberto (Eddie) Soto

1949 to 2021

Whereas the Rev. Eriberto (Eddie) Soto was born on October 2, 1949, and passed from this life on January 7, 2021, at the age of 71, the Presbytery of St. Augustine gives thanks for his life and ministry with the following resolution:

Eddie was a retired minister of our presbytery, serving as the pastor of Ft. Caroline United Methodist Church in Jacksonville. His faith journey began at his birth in New York City to Puerto Rican parents, third generation Protestants who came to the United States after the Second World War. As a teenager, he had what he described as a personal experience with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of his life in a Hispanic Protestant Church in Brooklyn. After high school, he worked for the American Bible Society, entered theological studies in Costa Rica, and was ordained by the National Presbyterian Church of Guatemala in 1973, where he spent ten years. Eddie later received a Master of Divinity degree from Sioux Falls Seminary (formerly known as North American Baptist Seminary) and a Master of Theology degree from Princeton Theological Seminary with an emphasis in historical theology. He was also awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Theology from Florida Christian University in Orlando, Florida in 2007.

Fluent in English, Spanish and Portuguese, Eddie served the Lord in congregations, seminaries, presbytery staff, and other ministries in the United States and abroad. He was the Coordinator for South America of the PC(USA) world missions for four years, supporting the church's efforts in seven countries by selecting, appointing and supervising missionary personnel. Congregations served in the United States prior to membership in our presbytery included (most recent listed first) Rockville Presbyterian Church in Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina; Faith Presbyterian Church in Tallahassee, Florida; First Presbyterian Church in Hoboken, New Jersey; and Spanish American Baptist Church in Union City, New Jersey. Eddie was also honored to serve as the Associate Executive Presbyter for Latin American Ministries in the Presbytery of Charleston Atlantic.

Eddie's extensive international ministry experience included three official interpreter assignments (Spanish and Portuguese) at General Assemblies of the World Alliance of

Reformed Churches (now the World Communion of Reformed Churches) (Hungary in 1997, Ghana in 2004, and Grand Rapids, Michigan in 2010).

Eddie became a member of our presbytery eight years ago following his transfer from Charleston-Atlantic Presbytery. He served as parish associate at First Presbyterian Church of Gainesville for one year before accepting the more lengthy call at Ft. Caroline UMC. While continuing to serve there, Eddie was granted the status of honorably retired in 2015. We were pleased to elect Eddie as one of our commissioners to the 221st General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) held in Detroit in the summer of 2014. Those who served with him from this presbytery were amazed at the number of people he knew from serving Christ in so many different ways and places!

Eddie was an engaging preacher and brought a joyful spirit to all of his ministry and personal interactions. One of his United Methodist colleagues who worked with him described him as passionate about theology, missions, and responding to human needs. In Eddie's last annual update to the Call Commission during August 2020, he wrote: "I appreciate your prayers on behalf of our ministry during this challenging time so that God will sustain us with the strength and the vision the Holy Spirit gives us. We continue to rejoice and believe that God is in charge and will work all things out for God's glory and our well being as the Church of Jesus Christ!!"

Sometimes the time that ministers commit to their calls can be overwhelming, making it difficult to devote precious time to family and friends. Not so with Eddie! Eddie was devoted to his family, and especially to his wife Marcia Leite Soto, a third generation Presbyterian whom he met while serving Christ in Brazil. Eddie had three children (Laura, Mike, Ana) and seven grandchildren from one to 22 years old. He also treasured the time he spent in fellowship and spiritual conversation with friends and colleagues who lived locally or visited from out of town.

We will miss Eddie, a unique and precious child of God, who brought a rich background of knowledge, wisdom and experience into our midst and left us far too soon. We are comforted with our confidence in the eternal life promised by our Lord Jesus, and we can imagine the Lord greeting him with these words: "Well done, good and faithful servant."

This resolution is written with thanks to God Almighty and shall be placed in the minutes of the Winter Stated Meeting held on February 6, 2021.