**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO CONGRATULATE THE HONORABLE JOHN GREGG MCMASTER, JR., OF RICHLAND COUNTY ON THE OCCASION OF HIS NINETY‑NINTH BIRTHDAY AND TO WISH HIM A JOYOUS BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION AND MUCH HAPPINESS IN THE DAYS AHEAD.

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives is delighted to learn that the Honorable John Gregg McMaster, Jr., of Richland County will celebrate his ninety‑ninth birthday on March 16, 2013; and

Whereas, born in Florence on March 16, 1914, John Gregg McMaster, Jr., was the son of Dr. and Mrs. John Gregg McMaster, Sr., he a native of Winnsboro and she, née Eleanor Gourdin, a native of Williamsburg County; and

Whereas, in preparation for his distinguished career, Mr. McMaster received a bachelor’s degree in economics from the University of South Carolina in 1936, his L.L.B. from the University of South Carolina School of Law in 1938 and was admitted to practice that year, and his J.D. in 1970; and

Whereas, while at the university, he was a member of Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity, which he served as president. In addition, he enjoyed membership in the German Club, dance club, and Glee Club and served as president of his sophomore class; and

Whereas, in the spring of 1941, several months before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Mr. McMaster applied for, and received, a commission in the United States Naval Reserves as an ensign. However, the discovery of a minor heart condition ended his military career. Unable to serve abroad, he returned to Columbia to serve as in‑house counsel for the state rationing board; and

Whereas, in 1944, he married Ida Dargan of Florence, whose nickname was “Pet,” and they had six children, a fine troupe of boys: John Gregg III, Henry Dargan, George Hunter, William Gourdin, Frank Barnwell, and Joseph Dargan, all of whom live in Columbia. The couple held a strong belief in education, and each of their sons, reflecting that belief, earned two degrees, including four law degrees, an M.S.W., and an M.B.A.; and

Whereas, his public service covers decades. John Gregg McMaster, Jr., was elected to the South Carolina House of Representatives in 1944, serving two terms. From 1953 through 1954, he served as Code Commissioner for South Carolina. He also served as a member of the South Carolina Aeronautics Commission from 1952 through l967, the last eleven years as chairman; and

Whereas, highly respected by his peers, he served as president of the Richland County Bar Association in 1976. From 1982 through 1988, he served on the board of the Richland County Public Defender Corporation, the last two years as chairman; and

Whereas, in the courtroom, this veteran attorney tried cases with such enthusiasm and confidence that it made good theater. Other lawyers, especially younger ones, would come to the courthouse when they knew he was engaged in the trial of a jury case. He taught the younger lawyers that the key to success was good preparation. Many lawyers today credit him as the model for their own accomplishments; and

Whereas, his outstanding service has won him many honors over the years. Mr. McMaster was elected a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers in 1968; awarded membership in the Cum Laude Club by Fellows of the Foundation, the University of South Carolina Education Foundation, in 1969; elected a Fellow‑International Academy of Trial Lawyers in 1981; and named winner of the John W. Williams Distinguished Service Award by the Richland County Bar Association in 1991; and

Whereas, further, Governor Carroll Campbell awarded Mr. McMaster the Order of the Palmetto, the highest honor granted to a civilian in South Carolina, in 1991. He also was honored by resolution of the South Carolina House of Representatives for distinguished service to the South Carolina Association of Life Insurance Companies in 1991, granted the Worthy Adversary Award by the South Carolina Trial Lawyers Association in 2004, awarded membership in the American Board of Trial Associates in 2004, and named as recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Richland County Bar Association in 2012; and

Whereas, John Gregg McMaster, Jr., is a member of the Richland County Bar Association, South Carolina Bar, National Association of Railroad Trial Counsel, South Carolina Defense Trial Attorneys Association, Defense Research Institute, Inc., and Fourth Circuit Judicial Conference. He is the senior practicing attorney in South Carolina, having been at the bar almost seventy‑five years since admission on May 31, 1938. He is admitted to practice before all state and federal courts in South Carolina; and

Whereas, a founding member of the Saint Andrews Society of Columbia, he has served as the organization’s president and made trips to Scotland to learn of that heritage. He encourages his children to learn about their Scottish and French Huguenot heritage, the history of their family, and the remarkable history of South Carolina. He is also a member of numerous social, historical, and literary groups; and

Whereas, as a man of strong faith and a student of the Bible, Mr. McMaster has been a member of First Presbyterian Church in Columbia since his college days and has served as Sunday school teacher, deacon, elder, and elder emeritus. In addition, he has served as a member of numerous church committees; and

Whereas, he is an avid sportsman, loves golf and dogs, and regularly played basketball and worked out at the Columbia Y.M.C.A. until his late eighties; and

Whereas, like Will Rogers, he never met a man he did not like. To his way of thinking, a person’s station in life does not matter, so Mr. McMaster can be found in conversation with the doorman or building janitor as easily as with the president of the company; and

Whereas, originally in England, the word “gentleman” had a meaning that referred to property and titles. In America, we have construed the word to mean one who behaves honorably and considerately and is possessed of good manners. Mr. McMaster’s life and actions reflect the best meaning of this word, for he is a gentle man; and

Whereas, grateful for his dedicated life of service, the House of Representatives is proud to honor this son of South Carolina at the celebration of his ninety‑ninth birthday, and the members join with his family and friends in congratulating him on reaching this exceptional milestone. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, congratulate the Honorable John Gregg McMaster, Jr., of Richland County on the occasion of his ninety‑ninth birthday and wish him a joyous birthday celebration and much happiness in the days ahead.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to the Honorable John Gregg McMaster, Jr.

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