**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND COMMEND THE OUTSTANDING LEGACY AND FINE PROFESSIONAL TRADITION OF THE MORRIS FUNERAL HOME OF BENNETTSVILLE AND TO CONGRATULATE THE FAMILY OWNERS AND THE STAFF AS THEY CELEBRATE THEIR ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF SERVING FAMILIES WITH DIGNITY AND COMPASSION.

Whereas, the members the South Carolina House of Representatives are pleased to learn that the Morris Funeral Home of Bennettsville will celebrate its one hundredth anniversary of quality professional service to citizens of Marlboro County; and

Whereas, founded in 1914 by Joseph H. W. “Joe” Morris, Sr., a skilled brick‑mason, talented musician, and devoted family man, Morris Funeral Home of Bennettsville has been serving families during times of loss for a century; and

Whereas, he was the son of Professor Joseph W. Morris, who was born in 1850 to “free” parents in Charleston and was educated in private and later public schools of Charleston before graduating with honors from Howard University; and

Whereas, Professor Morris entered the University of South Carolina Law School in the fall of 1875, graduated with distinction in 1876, and became president of Allen University in Columbia during the late 1800s, serving as a professor of law, mathematics, and ancient languages; and

Whereas, his young son Joe Morris, a native of Columbia, served as a partner at Johnson, Bradley & Morris Funeral Home in Columbia until he decided to follow his entrepreneurial interests in mortuary science when he moved his beloved wife, Mamie, and their young children from Columbia to Bennettsville and founded Morris Funeral Home; and

Whereas, with dignity and compassion, he provided quality professional care and fostered a legacy of excellence on which three other family‑owned funeral homes were founded in Cheraw and in Laurinburg and Red Springs, North Carolina, and three funeral homes continue to operate under the Morris “brand”; and

Whereas, when Mr. Morris suffered a debilitating stroke, his grandson, James S. “Jimmy” McLeod, son of Leah Morris Worrell, requested and received an early honorable discharge from the military in order to return home, assist with the family business, and take care of his grandfather; and

Whereas, he graduated from Eckels College of Mortuary Science in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and became the manager of the funeral home in Bennettsville, and when his grandfather died, Jimmy McLeod considered himself the fiduciary of the Morris “brand” and legacy; and

Whereas, Mr. McLeod was equally compassionate about caring for the loved ones of those who entrusted them to Morris Funeral Home as he was to the living, and he worked ardently to improve the lives and conditions of those within his community; and

Whereas, he was appointed to serve on the Social Services Board in 1968, the first African American since Reconstruction to be appointed to a State Board in Marlboro County, and was elected to the Bennettsville City Council in 1971 and served two terms; and

Whereas, believing in the proverb, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it,” Jimmy McLeod and his beloved wife, the late Shirley J. McLeod, reared four fine children: Tracey, Mia, Erica, and Jimmy, Jr.; and

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives is profoundly grateful for the centennial legacy of the Morris Funeral Home, and the members honor the dignity and compassion that has defined and distinguished the courteous and professional service of the Morris and McLeod families. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the House of Representatives of the State of South Carolina, by this resolution, recognize and commend the outstanding legacy and fine professional tradition of the Morris Funeral Home of Bennettsville and congratulate the family owners and the staff as they celebrate their one hundredth anniversary of serving families with dignity and compassion.

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