**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR HOLLYWILD ANIMAL PARK IN SPARTANBURG COUNTY FOR MORE THAN FOUR DECADES OF OUTSTANDING AND TIRELESS EFFORTS IN DEVELOPING THIS EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE FOR THE COMMUNITY AND TO COMMEND THE PARK’S RECENT ENTRANCE INTO AN INTERNATIONAL BREEDING PROGRAM AS PART OF ITS DEDICATION TO CONSERVATION AND SPECIES DIVERSITY.

Whereas, in the 1950s, David Meeks and his parents, James and Daisy Meeks, began adding a collection of indigenous animals to their own farm animals in Holly Springs. When the Meeks family moved to a home on Hampton Road in Wellford in 1962, they already had acquired a cougar, a bob cat, raccoons, pheasants, as well as water fowl, goats, and horses; and

Whereas, James Meeks applied for a USDA license in order to be able to share his animals, and in 1970, the family opened M & M Zoo by converting the family’s private menagerie in their backyard into a small zoo open to the public. When David and Lucia Meeks were married in 1985, they purchased one hundred percent of his parent’s portion of the zoo, including all land, animals, and home, dissolving M & M Zoo and forming a new business, Little Mountain Zoological Park; and

Whereas, because the animals were being used in Hollywood productions, affording major funding for park development, the name was changed to Hollywild Animal Park in 1987. Hollywild receives no federal or state funding for operational support, but since 1999, it has enjoyed non‑profit status and is committed to providing an interactive and enlightening experience for visitors and an enriching and respectful environment for the animals; and

Whereas, today the park’s wildlife collection contains over five hundred animals, many of them extinct in the wild, native to six continents, and David Meeks has provided animal talent for more than sixty‑five feature films; and

Whereas, Hollywild offers a variety of educational programs through the live Creature Feature shows, daily Safari bus rides during the regular season, and special programs on‑site and off‑site. Visitors enjoy purchasing bags of animal food or baby bottles to feed animals in the petting areas; and

Whereas, the park’s amphitheater, picnic shelters, pavilion, and an inside loft area are available for group events, and from mid‑November into the New Year, Hollywild hosts its annual Holiday Lights Safari, with millions of lights that turn the park into a sparkling winter wonderland; and

Whereas, on Monday, March 10, 2015, a Timbavati white lion named Mandela, born in captivity in 2010 and hand raised at the Ukutula Research and Education Facility in South Africa, arrived at Hollywild, weighing more than six hundred pounds and accompanied by a nine‑year‑old lioness named Icis; and

Whereas, Icis, born and reared at Tiger World Conservation and Education Center in North Carolina, is a brown or normal color variation lioness with the white recessive gene, which research and experience have proven the most valuable combination for mating with white lions to ensure a strong line of white descendants; and

Whereas, this acquisition marks the park’s initial participation in an international breeding program. It is believed that fewer than three hundred white lions exist in the world today, and since only a handful of facilities in the United States provide homes to white lions, Mandela offers a remarkable attraction for visitors in the Upstate; and

Whereas, the House of Representatives deeply appreciates the significant contributions that Hollywild Animal Park has made to providing quality educational experiences for visitors and its strong dedication to conservation and species diversity. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, recognize and honor Hollywild Animal Park in Spartanburg County for more than four decades of outstanding and tireless efforts in developing this educational resource for the community and commend the park’s recent entrance into an international breeding program as part of its dedication to conservation and species diversity.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to David Meeks.

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