**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO EXPRESS THE PROFOUND SORROW OF THE MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES UPON THE DEATH OF GERALDINE HILLARD MATTHEWS OF BOWMAN, BELOVED WIFE OF SOUTH CAROLINA STATE SENATOR JOHN MATTHEWS, AND TO EXTEND THE DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO HER FAMILY AND MANY FRIENDS.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Geraldine Hillard Matthews of Bowman, beloved wife of South Carolina State Senator John Matthews, on December 25, 2015; and

Whereas, the fifth child of eight siblings, the former Geraldine Hillard was born to John (“Tootsie”) and Maria Hillard of Santee on September 29, 1940. With her dear husband, she raised five children, Cynthia, Michael, Stephanie, John III, and Brian, who have given their parents the joy of ten grandchildren, Corliss, Kenya, Matthew, Emery, Lauren, Jonathan, Caroline, Sheridan, Claudia, and Jaedon, as well as one great‑grandchild, Kingston; and

Whereas, the young Geraldine, reared in Santee, became known for her exemplary oratorical skills and served in Providence Baptist Church in Providence at an early age; and

Whereas, this loving and devoted wife joined her husband at Pineville United Methodist Church and served in many leadership roles, including the United Methodist Women’s Council, Lay Leadership Committee, Usher Board, and Senior Choir, and she was the first woman elected to the Administrative Council, for which she served as chairperson for ten years. She also served as head usher and provided service to the People Parish Relationship Committee, Senior Ushers, Nominating Committee, and Administrative Council. Her children’s sermons were much enjoyed, and as a class leader she was a devout Bible‑study student; and

Whereas, in preparation for her career, Geraldine graduated as valedictorian from Elloree Training School and earned her bachelor’s degree in library science from South Carolina State University. She dedicated thirty years to public education and served as a reading specialist at the Gressette Center in St. Matthews; and

Whereas, a selfless giver and matriarch of the Bowman community, Geraldine Matthews served as vice chair of the Lower Orangeburg/Upper Dorchester Economic Development Initiative and was a member of the Orangeburg Regional Hospital Foundation Board, Orangeburg Consolidated School District Five Foundation Board, and Adult Literacy Programs. She was precinct and community coordinator, life member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and the NAACP, founding member of the LaCharm Club, and president of her bridge club. Further, her service extended into many professional affiliations, such as the National Education Association and South Carolina Education Association; and

Whereas, Geraldine Matthews’ philosophy on life reflected her love of family and good family values. She expressed this philosophy to her family, in part, in this way: “Be sensitive toward the needs of others; educate yourself for your benefit and for the betterment of the world; but, most of all, be faithful, be strong, and walk according to the will of God”; and

Whereas, her many admirers respected and praised her outstanding leadership, dedication, and enduring service to the State of South Carolina, which will not be forgotten. She will be greatly missed by those who had the privilege of knowing, loving, and working with her. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, express their profound sorrow upon the death of Geraldine Hillard Matthews of Bowman, beloved wife of South Carolina State Senator John Matthews, and extend the deepest sympathy to her family and many friends.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to South Carolina State Senator John Matthews for the family.

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