**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE PHILLIS WHEATLEY LITERARY AND SOCIAL CLUB OF CHARLESTON FOR ITS MEANINGFUL LITERARY AND EDUCATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND TO CONGRATULATE ITS MEMBERS UPON THE OCCASION OF ITS ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY.

Whereas, it is altogether fitting and proper that the South Carolina House of Representatives should pause in its deliberations to express deep appreciation to the members of the Phillis Wheatley Literary and Social Club (PWLSC) of Charleston for their prodigious influence upon literary culture in the Palmetto State over the last century; and

Whereas, founded by Jeannette Keeble Cox in Charleston in December 1916, the PWLSC was organized by educated and professional black women with the palpable hope for the advancement that black teachers in the city schools could provide for young black women; and

Whereas, Mrs. Cox was the wife of Benjamin F. Cox, the principal of Avery Normal Institute, and she sought to assist in the development of Avery Institute and to influence education and Charleston society in the early 1900s. The majority of the other PWLSC founders served on the faculty of Avery Institute; and

Whereas, Mrs. Cox named the PWLSC after the beloved American poet Phillis Wheatley, the first black poet to publish a book of poetry in America. At the estimated age of eight, Phillis Wheatley had been kidnapped from Senegal/Gambia, Africa, and she was sold into slavery in Boston, Massachusetts. In the home where she served, her frail body was nurtured back to health, and she was educated and encouraged in literary pursuits until she was manumitted. She died in her early thirties; and

Whereas, from the inception of the PWLSC, members used her name as their eponym, calling themselves “The Phillis Wheatleys,” women who would strive against the strictures of the social climate to achieve personal and societal accomplishments through education; and

Whereas, a century later the PWLSC continues to thrive amid challenges, disappointments, and progress, and the members maintain the original goal of self‑improvement and of enjoying and absorbing the culture redolent in the arts while encouraging other black women to join them; and

Whereas, educators comprise a significant portion of the current PWLSC membership, and the women of the organization remain personally dedicated to providing active volunteer and financial support to women’s organizations, libraries, public schools, students, and teachers; and

Whereas, today the members of the PWLSC sponsor essay contests, volunteer in city libraries and schools, read to and mentor children and young parents, support organizations with similar goals, and invite renown performers to the City of Charleston for cultural functions and events; and

Whereas, the members of the House of Representatives of the State of South Carolina are pleased to honor this remarkable literary organization at the celebration of its one hundredth anniversary and join in congratulating the members on reaching this extraordinary milestone. 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 the Phillis Wheatley Literary and Social Club of Charleston for its meaningful literary and educational contributions and congratulate its members upon the occasion of its one hundredth anniversary.

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