**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO POSTHUMOUSLY RECOGNIZE SKIPP PEARSON AS THE AMBASSADOR OF JAZZ FOR SOUTH CAROLINA IN HONOR OF HIS EXTRAORDINARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WORLD OF JAZZ MUSIC.

Whereas, Thales Thomas “Skipp” Pearson, the beloved Columbia saxophonist known to many as Pops, began his life-long musical career at the age of eight. Showing an extraordinary aptitude for learning and playing music, he initially played the drums and the saxophone, and by fifteen, he was leading a five-piece orchestra, The Rhythm Artists; and

Whereas, jazz music education was at the forefront of Skipp’s lifelong mission to preserve and promote jazz. With a Bachelor of Arts in Music Education from Claflin College, he served as a music teacher and school band director in Bamberg and Clarendon Counties for more than twenty years. In these roles, he created one of the oldest band music programs in South Carolina public schools and designed a community-based program for Scotts Branch High School which provided many students with their first experience with and exposure to music; and

Whereas, Skipp remained an educator even when he was performing. In Columbia, he played every Thursday for seventeen years at the brewpub Hunter‑Gatherer, and as part of these weekly performances, he also hosted community jazz workshops to mentor up‑and‑coming musicians and connect them with longstanding players. Skipp made it his mission to do more than just play jazz, opening up the form to others in the community and serving as a mentor to many over the years; and

Whereas, a leader in his community, Skipp created a variety of public arts‑in‑education projects and programs, seeking to build a greater appreciation for all forms of music. Through his namesake foundation, the Skipp Pearson Jazz Foundation, he hosted many outreach events, and he maintained a near‑constant weekend residency at Le Cafe Jazz, a jazz club in Finlay Park operated by his foundation; and

Whereas, across a music career that spanned five decades, Skipp took his place among and shared the stage with many famous names of the music world, including Otis Redding, Wynton Marsalis, Patti LaBelle, Miles Davis, and Sam Cooke. He also played for famous audiences, including four American presidents, kings and queens of Europe, statesmen, and royals of the world; and

Whereas, throughout his life, Skipp received many honors and awards, including the Order of the Palmetto, the Elizabeth O’Neill Verner Award for the Arts, and induction into the South Carolina State University Jazz Hall of Fame; and

Whereas, a hands‑on educator, mentor to aspiring artists, and first-rate performer, Skipp Pearson was a jazz master known throughout the world, and his legacy lives on in the jazz music that he loved so much. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, posthumously recognize Skipp Pearson as the Ambassador of Jazz for South Carolina in honor of his extraordinary contributions to the world of jazz music.

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