**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR REVEREND RICKY RAY EZELL, SR., PASTOR OF CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH IN COLUMBIA, AND TO CONGRATULATE HIM FOR TWENTY-ONE YEARS OF FAITHFUL AND MEANINGFUL PASTORAL MINISTRY.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina Senate are pleased to learn that Reverend Ricky Ray Ezell, Sr., is celebrating more than two decades of pastoral ministry; and

Whereas, a native of Fort Valley, Georgia, where he graduated from Peach County High School, he is the son of the late John and Luchers Robinson Ezell; and

Whereas, Reverend Ezell earned a bachelor’s degree in criminology from Fort Valley State University, where he was honored with the Ty Cobb Scholarship Award and the Thermostat Award for attaining the highest academic average in criminology. He was also co‑founder of the *Peach County Progress*, the first black newspaper in Fort Valley; and

Whereas, he earned two master’s degrees: one in criminology with a concentration in court administration from the University of South Carolina, where he received a Distinguished Service Award for his contributions to the college, and the other, a master of divinity with an emphasis in pastoral leadership from Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia; and

Whereas, he also earned a doctorate of ministry from Gordon‑Conwell Theological Seminary in Charlotte, North Carolina, on May 20, 2017; and

Whereas, currently the pastor of the Central Baptist Church in Columbia, Reverend Ezell served as moderator for the Gethsemane Baptist Association and an adjunct professor of religion at Lutheran Southern Seminary, and he currently serves on the board of trustees for Morris College in Sumter; and

Whereas, he led the congregation of Central Baptist in the construction of a new four‑million dollar ministry complex that houses a new sanctuary, an administrative and educational building, and a family life center; and

Whereas, under Reverend Ezell’s leadership, the church established a Community Development Cooperation to provide affordable housing for those in the community, and the church recently purchased the former Sunset Shopping Center, a shopping center with forty thousand square feet and eight and a half acres of land, to transform into an economic development center to serve needs in the surrounding community; and

Whereas, for contributions in the field of criminology, he has been honored with the Distinguished Alumni Award from Fort Valley State University and as Man of the Year for his contributions in the Fort Valley community; and

Whereas, Reverend Ezell received the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Leadership Award from the Midlands Coalition of Churches; the Community Service Award from the Delta Sigma Theta, Inc., Columbia Chapter; and the Presidential Citation Award by Dr. Luns C. Richardson and Morris College in Sumter; and

Whereas, he and his beloved wife, the former Bernice Gadson of Barnwell, have reared three fine sons: Ricky, Jr., Brandon, and Dorian, and they have been blessed with an adorable granddaughter, NaVaeh Ka’Ren Ezell; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina Senate applaud the significant service that Reverend Ezell has provided with devotion to his community, to citizens of the Palmetto State, and to his God. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, recognize and honor Reverend Ricky Ray Ezell, Sr., Pastor of Central Baptist Church in Columbia, and congratulate him for twenty-one years of faithful and meaningful pastoral ministry.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Reverend Ricky Ray Ezell, Sr.

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