**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO HONOR SONYA R. HODGES GRANTHAM FOR HER COMMITMENT TO THE CONSERVATION OF MEANINGFUL SOUTH CAROLINA HISTORY AND TO EXPRESS GRATITUDE FOR HER ENDEAVORS TOWARD PRESERVING AND RESTORING THE CHILDS CEMETERY.

Whereas, Sonya Grantham, a lifelong resident of Columbia, has devoted the majority of her adult life to public service. A fervent student of history, Sonya has been the sole restorer, preservationist, and researcher responsible for revitalizing the Childs Cemetery; and

Whereas, after decades of neglect, the Childs Cemetery, the final resting place of many brave patriots, will receive the historical recognition it deserves with a marker bearing the inscription “They were South Carolinians sent into the bloody trenches of World War I. These brave black soldiers arrived on the Western Front in April of 1918, and they were placed under the French Command. The 371st Infantry brought down three German planes by rifle fire. During the Great War, over 1,000 men out of 2,384 lost their lives”; and

Whereas, despite heavy casualties, the 371st Regiment not only shot down three German planes, but captured many prisoners, claimed artillery weapons, a munitions depot, railroad cars, and enormous quantities of supplies; and

Whereas, these brave soldiers are largely forgotten despite having been honored with one hundred forty‑six citations for bravery; receiving the Croix de Guerre, the French Legion of Honor; and the only Congressional Medal of Honor ever awarded to an African‑American soldier for World War I service; and

Whereas, Sonya, educated in the schools of Richland County, made a tenacious commitment to restore this cemetery and honor these courageous veterans in a more fitting manner. Her dedication to the community does not stop there, however. She has served as the Chair of Volunteers with the American Red Cross, Armed Forces Services, Fort Jackson, South Carolina; as the Founder and President of the 371st Historical Society, World War I; Founder of the Cornbread Jubilee; and Co‑founder of the Veterans Formation. Furthermore, Sonya is a member of the American Legion Post 215; Columbia Council of Neighborhoods; 82nd Airborne Historical Society, Fort Bragg, North Carolina; National Corn Growers Association; Advocate‑Kansas Wheat Commission; South Carolina Genealogical Society, Columbia Chapter; 369th Historical Society, New York, New York; South Carolina Agriculture Council; South Carolina Society; and “Together We Can Read” Vietnam Veterans of America; and

Whereas, a published author of several books, Sonya Grantham is also a mother of ten beloved children and grandmother of seven cherished grandchildren; and

Whereas, the members of the House of Representatives wish to commend Sonya for her efforts in preserving an important piece of South Carolina history. Through Sonya’s works, valiant soldiers, who sacrificed their lives to preserve American freedom, will receive much‑due recognition. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, honor Sonya R. Hodges Grantham for her commitment to the conservation of meaningful South Carolina history and express gratitude for her endeavors towards preserving and restoring the Childs Cemetery.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Sonya Grantham.

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