**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR WILLIE AND FRISTELLA CORNELIUS OF COLUMBIA FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE WITH THE PALMETTO TIGERS FOOTBALL TEAM AND TO WISH THEM WELL AS THEY CONTINUE TO SERVE THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

Whereas, it is with great pleasure that the South Carolina House of Representatives honors individuals who freely give of their time and resources for the good of others. Willie and Fristella Cornelius of Columbia have contributed valuable community service to this great State and are thereby worthy of praise; and

Whereas, born and raised in Columbia, as was his wife, Fristella, Willie Cornelius graduated from Booker T. Washington High School. He is currently retired but worked in the past for the Richland County Recreation Department and the University of South Carolina; and

Whereas, Willie, who began coaching in 1974, has coached football, baseball, basketball, and soccer over the years. He has never been paid for coaching; he simply enjoys making a difference in children’s lives. He therefore has devoted his personal time to mentoring children both on and off the field. Former players visit him to let him know what a positive influence he was in their lives. These former players have told Willie that it was because of him that they were able to stay on the right path in life; and

Whereas, a graduate of Eau Claire High School, Fristella Cornelius is employed by Richland County. Willie and Fristella formed the Palmetto Tigers in 2001 because there was a need in Columbia for another youth football team. Fristella took on the job of president and agreed to handle all the bookkeeping. This is not a paid position, and there is an incredible amount of work that goes into managing the Palmetto Tigers. For example, this past season there were one hundred twenty players. This means there were one hundred twenty applications, birth certificates, physicals, and report cards that needed to be collected and organized for each player. The Pop Warner League has strict rules that can be very time‑consuming to comply with, and Fristella is responsible for all the reporting and correspondence. Additionally, the children’s safety is Willie and Fristella’s highest priority, so they always go the extra mile in ensuring that each child is playing in the safest possible way; and

Whereas, recently, Willie and Fristella spent more than three thousand dollars of their own money on football equipment for the Palmetto Tigers. They needed new pads for the boys, so they bought them. They needed new field markers, so they bought them. They could have chosen to raise the cost of joining the Tigers to help offset these costs, but they didn’t want to put a financial burden on the Palmetto Tiger families; and

Whereas, when the Palmetto Tigers won the state championship on October 28, 2017, Willie did not celebrate immediately. Instead, he chose to console and honor the other team, comprised of eleven‑, twelve‑, and thirteen‑year‑olds. He told them they had played well and that they must hold their heads up high even though they were upset that they had lost. It was an emotional and heartfelt moment that those boys likely never will forget; and

Whereas, the success of the State of South Carolina and the strength of its communities depend, in great measure, upon the dedication of individuals like Willie and Fristella Cornelius who use their talents and resources to serve others. 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 Willie and Fristella Cornelius of Columbia for their outstanding community service with the Palmetto Tigers football team and wish them well as they continue to serve the people of South Carolina.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Willie and Fristella Cornelius.

‑‑‑‑XX‑‑‑‑