**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND COMMEND RAVEN DENNIS III, ALSO KNOWN AS “CAKE MAN RAVEN” FOR HIS INSPIRING CLIMB TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND HIS EXCEPTIONAL CULINARY CONFECTIONS.

Whereas, Raven Dennis III was born in Harlem, New York, but the young Raven dreamed of going south to Grandma’s house to live. His dreams were fulfilled, and soon he was growing up in Mt. Pleasant; and

Whereas, striving to be like Grandma, four‑year‑old Raven grew flowers and vegetables and made mud pies and mud cakes. At the age of nine, he baked his first real cake and at thirteen made his first pastry sale: five dollars for two coconut pies, confections that currently sell for eighteen dollars apiece in his Brooklyn bakery; and

Whereas, during his years in high school, his talents in pastry arts allowed him to win cake shows and competitions all over South Carolina. Soon his high school teacher introduced him to Distributive Education Clubs of America, through which he competed in the area of entrepreneurship. His business plan won the top state award in 1984 and 1985; and

Whereas, while holding the title of Mr. South Carolina, he went on to the national competition in Kansas City in 1984 and received honors in the San Francisco finals in 1985. Raven returned home with top honors and a scholarship; and

Whereas, after graduation from Mt. Pleasant High School, he became known as “cake boy,” later maturing to “Cake Man Raven,” a sobriquet given to him by a local newspaper; and

Whereas, he continued his education at Johnson & Wales University and Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, always carrying his South Carolina business cards, which simply read “All‑Occasion Cakes.” He aspired to go to Cornell University for graduate school, but when his grandmother died in 1989, his plans were shattered; and

Whereas, he returned to Johnson & Wales in 1998 to pursue a master’s degree in education while working as an admissions officer for Johnson & Wales and as an undergraduate advisor to the local chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.; and

Whereas, Raven did not shirk hard work. Throughout college, he labored at the New York Hilton Hotel as a room service waiter, later becoming night captain. During the day shift, he worked in a stock brokerage firm. Finding that numbers were not his forte, he returned to making wedding and special occasion cakes; and

Whereas, while gaining fame in “Cakedom,” Raven captured yet another name: “Ice Man.” He has carved ice in the historic World Trade Center’s Windows on the World, and his ice creations took his name to the Grammy Awards from 1986 to 1988; and

Whereas, he also worked with International Management Group as a corporate dining room manager. But amidst the ups and downs of his life, Raven decided he would bake full‑time in his apartment until he was able to rent a storefront or purchase a building to house his developing confectionary enterprise; and

Whereas, then came a real breakthrough for Raven. In December 1991, a reporter wrote an article about him, calling him “Harlem Cake Man Raven.” In the same week, *CBS Weekend News* called and filmed a program on his cakes, dubbed “The Rage in Harlem.” This was only the beginning of a long train of media interviews and articles about this master baker; and

Whereas, after the death of his father in 2000, Raven turned grief into triumph by accomplishing his life’s goal of owning a full service bakery and confectionery. He obtained space at 708 Fulton Street in Brooklyn, which had been the official home of the thriving Cake Man Raven Confectionary for the past several years. The shop has shipped its signature cake, Southern red velvet, all over the world, and the Grammy Awards, Espy Awards, Emmys, Apollo Hall of Fame, and Rock‑n‑Roll Hall of Fame all have been backdrops for his creations. High‑profile celebrities from Bill Cosby, Stevie Wonder, and Oprah Winfrey to Katie Couric, New York Governor George Pataki, and Regis Philbin have ordered their cakes from him; and

Whereas, Raven credits his experiences in the South as giving him the training that has enabled him to travel the United States and the world with his cake creations; and

Whereas, with great admiration for his tenacity and creativity, the Senate takes pleasure in recognizing “Cake Man Raven” Dennis on his many years of outstanding entrepreneurship, a journey that began nearly thirty years ago, and the members wish him much continued success in all his future endeavors. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, recognize and commend Raven Dennis III, also known as “Cake Man Raven,” for his inspiring climb to entrepreneurship and his exceptional culinary confections.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to “Cake Man Raven” Dennis.

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