**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO EXPRESS THE DEEPEST SYMPATHY OF THE MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO THE FAMILY AND MANY FRIENDS OF M. J. “DOLLY” COOPER OF PIEDMONT, A DECORATED WORLD WAR II VETERAN, SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSMAN, AND A FORMER MEMBER OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, UPON HIS DEATH, AT THE AGE OF EIGHTY-EIGHT.

Whereas, the members of the General Assembly were deeply saddened to learn of the death on Saturday, April 25, 2009, of M. J. “Dolly” Cooper of Piedmont, a decorated World War II veteran, successful businessman, and former member of the South Carolina House of Representatives; and

Whereas, he was born in Piedmont, was educated in the Anderson County school system, attended Draughon’s Business College, Greenville Technical College, and Furman University, and for almost forty-five years was a department store owner in his local community before his retirement; and

Whereas, Dolly Cooper joined the Easley National Guard on September 3, 1940. He served with the 30th Infantry Division in World War II, where he saw eleven months of combat in Europe from Normandy, St-Lo, Mortain, Battle of the Bulge, Roer River, Rhine River, and the capture of the last large German city of Madgeburg, forty-five miles from Berlin. He was awarded the Purple Heart, Bronze Star, American Defense Service Medal, and Combat Infantry Badge. He later received the Belgian Forragere Award from the Belgian Embassy for service in the Battle of the Bulge; and

Whereas, he was elected to the South Carolina House of Representatives in 1974, campaigning for more health care services for Piedmont, Pelzer, and Williamston. He served House District 10 for sixteen years as a member of the Medical, Military, Public and Municipal Affairs Committee. He was awarded the Order of the Palmetto by Governor Carroll Campbell upon his retirement in 1989. He was elected to the MUSC Board of Trustees, where he served from 1989 through 1996. He also served many years as a board member for the Pelzer Rescue Squad, Appalachian Health Council, and the Baptist Hospital Boards for Easley and Columbia; and

Whereas, he was a leader in the Baptist church, as a member of the Grove Station Baptist, River Road Mission, and First Baptist Piedmont, serving as deacon, Sunday school director, training union director, RA leader, and Sunday school teacher at various times throughout his life. He also served his community as a member of the Piedmont and Pelzer Lions Clubs for fifty-five years and as a member of the Wren Ruritan Club; and

Whereas, Dolly Cooper was a man who earned the respect and affection of all those with whom he came into contact. He was without question a person who never met a stranger and loved to help people. After his retirement, his passion was to visit the residents of Riverside Living Center on a daily basis, often bringing fresh fruit which he had purchased from local growers on his many trips to Florida. This admiration and respect was evidenced by the honors he received from the Anderson County Council with the naming of the M. J. “Dolly” Cooper Park in his honor and by the South Carolina General Assembly, which named the newly opened state veterans cemetery in Anderson after him; and

Whereas, Dolly Cooper was blessed with a large and wonderful family. He is survived by his wife of sixty-one years, Melba, with whom he shared his life’s work and to whom he was deeply devoted. Together they had four children Bob, Beth, Tim, and Dan, our friend and colleague in the General Assembly, and they count among their family a large number of grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and nieces and nephews; and

Whereas, with the death of this fine man at the age of eighty-eight, the people of Piedmont, Anderson County, and the State of South Carolina have lost a decorated veteran, respected public servant, a community leader, and good friend; and

Whereas, the members of the General Assembly would like the entire Cooper family to know their thoughts and prayers are with them in this time of sorrow and loss. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

That the members of the South Carolina General Assembly express their deepest sympathy to the family and many friends of M. J. “Dolly” Cooper of Piedmont, a decorated World War II veteran, successful businessman, and a former member of the South Carolina House of Representatives, upon his death, at the age of eighty-eight.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to his widow, Mrs. Melba Cooper.

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