**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO HONOR DR. WENDELL R. ESTEP FOR HIS TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AS PASTOR OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF COLUMBIA AND TO RECOGNIZE HIS DYNAMIC CHRISTIAN MINISTRY AND HIS DEDICATED SERVICE TO HIS FELLOW MAN.

Whereas, it is appropriate to recognize the contributions of South Carolinians who selflessly give of themselves for the betterment of others, and Dr. Wendell R. Estep, Pastor of First Baptist Church of Columbia, is certainly one such citizen who has given of his time and talents towards the spiritual and physical well-being of not just his congregation but the larger community as well; and

Whereas, this Texas native worked in television in Texas and Oklahoma before receiving the call to serve the Lord with pastorates at Liberty Baptist Church of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; First Baptist Church of Pawhuska, Oklahoma; Council Road Baptist Church of Bethany, Oklahoma; and then First Baptist Church of Columbia; and

Whereas, the twenty-fifth anniversary of Dr. Estep’s tenure at First Baptist will be recognized on Sunday, August 14, 2011, and the congregation will celebrate with their beloved pastor the many wonderful accomplishments of the church during this time including the building of the 3,400 seat sanctuary, new facilities for Christian education and music, the addition of the Family Life Center, and the completely refurbished Lindsay building with the Higher Grounds bookstore; and

Whereas, in addition to an impressive building campaign, under Dr. Estep’s leadership the church helped start new churches in Blythewood, Camden, and Lexington as well as Burmese and Spanish Missions at First Baptist; and

Whereas, the church has ministered to thousands through the Carolina Celebration of Liberty and the Columbia Christmas Pageant, Easter 2000, and America 2003; and

Whereas, in partnership with St. Peter’s Catholic Church of Columbia, the church continues to minister to the hungry each Thanksgiving through Feed the Hungry; and

Whereas, the Special Education and Deaf Ministries continue to thrive and reach so many citizens in the community with special needs, and the television ministry, with Dr. Estep’s special knowledge and early background in media, has expanded to five television stations and now essentially covers the entire State ministering to all who crave the word of God but may not otherwise be able to attend a church service; and

Whereas, past president of both the Oklahoma and South Carolina Baptist Conventions and the recipient of numerous awards and recognitions, Dr. Estep has led mission trips to Russia, the Holy Land, Greece, and Turkey; and

Whereas, Dr. Estep is also the loving husband of the former Lynda Sears and together they are proud to boast two children: Stephanie Von Estep Butler and Erik Glyn Estep; and

Whereas, it is with great pleasure that the members of the South Carolina Senate honor this outstanding servant of Christ for his twenty-five years of exceptional leadership and spiritual guidance resulting in the presence of the vital and vibrant First Baptist Church of Columbia dedicated to the Glory of God. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, honor Dr. Wendell R. Estep for his twenty-five years as Pastor of First Baptist Church of Columbia and recognize his dynamic Christian ministry and his dedicated service to his fellow man.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Dr. Wendell R. Estep.

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