**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO CONGRATULATE THE REVEREND DR. WILLIE S. HARRISON OF GREENWOOD COUNTY ON THE OCCASION OF HIS EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY, AND TO WISH HIM A JOYOUS BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION AND MANY YEARS OF CONTINUED HEALTH AND HAPPINESS.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives are delighted to learn that the Reverend Dr. Willie S. Harrison of Greenwood County will celebrate his eightieth birthday on June 1, 2012; and

Whereas, born on June 1, 1932, he has witnessed the remarkable civil rights struggles and changes in the nation, spanning into the second decade of the twenty‑first century; and

Whereas, Willie Harrison, the eighth of Gentle H. and Willie Mae Covington Harrison’s nine children, grew up in a rural area near Greenwood where he managed to attend school in spite of the strenuous demands of life on young African‑American males; and

Whereas, although none of his brothers finished grammar school because of the need to help support the family, he did through the loving concern of his teacher, Ms. Henretta Williams; and riding a private bus daily, he was able to graduate from Brewer High School and earn a football scholarship to Benedict College; and

Whereas, the privations of that first year were so difficult that he volunteered to serve in the United States Army for two years, after which he returned under the “G.I. Bill” and completed a bachelor of science in mathematics from Benedict College in 1957; and

Whereas, in 1956, he married his beloved wife, Annaphine Nettles Harrison, and they were blessed to serve their community and church together for forty‑two years until her passing in 1998; and

Whereas, he also earned a master’s in education from South Carolina State University and a master of divinity from Erskine Theological Seminary and completed further study at the University of South Carolina, Clemson University, and the University of Cincinnati in Ohio; and

Whereas, he served as a school teacher, a coach, and a counselor and school administrator; in a management position with the Social Security Administration; and was a thrice elected member of Greenwood City Council, serving as Mayor Pro Tempore; and

Whereas, an active leader in the Civil Rights movement, he was an organizer of the Greenwood/Ninety‑Six branch of the NAACP and the Greenwood Area Council on Human Relations; and

Whereas, believing Christian ministry to be a sacred calling dealing with the most intimate aspects of life, he was licensed to preach in 1973 and ordained the next month by his home church, Mt. Herman Baptist Church in Greenwood County; and

Whereas, he served as pastor of Hopewell Baptist Church of Laurens, Pine Pleasant Baptist Church of Ninety‑Six, and for the past twenty-five years, Macedonia Baptist Church of Greenwood, where he has led the church and Macedonia Community Center to provide myriad of services to meet the needs of the community; and

Whereas, he was awarded an honorary doctorate by Lander University and was recently named one of Greenwood’s 100 Most Influential People; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives are pleased to honor this son of South Carolina at the celebration of his eightieth birthday and join with his family and friends in congratulating him on reaching this extraordinary milestone of eight decades. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, congratulate the Reverend Dr. Willie S. Harrison of Greenwood County on the occasion of his eightieth birthday, and wish him a joyous birthday celebration and many years of continued health and happiness.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to the Reverend Dr. Willie S. Harrison.

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