**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE CAROLINA PANTHERS FOOTBALL TEAM AND TEAM OWNER, JERRY RICHARDSON, FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING EFFORTS AS PART OF THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE AND FOR THEIR SIGNIFICANT AND MEANINGFUL IMPACT ON THE CULTURE AND ECONOMY OF THE PALMETTO STATE.

Whereas, the members of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina take great pleasure in commending the Carolina Panthers football team for twenty years of bringing professional football entertainment and enthusiasm to the Carolinas; and

Whereas, in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s, owner and founder of the Carolina Panthers, Jerry Richardson, began pursuing the competition for an NFL franchise. With support from U. S. Senators Jesse Helms of North Carolina and Fritz Hollings of South Carolina along with North Carolina Governor Jim Martin and South Carolina Governor Carroll Campbell, a blue-ribbon committee of leaders from both states, and incredible fan support, lobbying for the team kicked into high gear; and

Whereas, on October 26, 1993, it was announced that the National Football League had granted a franchise for the first professional football team in the Carolinas, the first expansion team in the league since 1976 and a long-time dream realized for Mr. Richardson; and

Whereas, Jerry Richardson, a graduate of Wofford College and a former NFL player, just the second former NFL player to own an NFL team, resided in Spartanburg for over forty years and is a member of both the South Carolina Athletics Hall of Fame and the South Carolina Business Hall of Fame; and

Whereas, in 1961, he opened his first Hardee's franchise and grew the company to two thousand five hundred stores with more than one hundred thousand employees; and

Whereas, the 1995 inaugural season for the Carolina Panthers was held at Frank Howard Field at Memorial Stadium in Clemson forging a lasting, permanent bond between South Carolinians and the team from our sister state; and

Whereas, every year since the team was created, the Carolina Panthers have held their training camp at Wofford College, the fourth‑longest, continuous training camp location among all NFL teams; and

Whereas, through the operation of the Panthers Training Camp at Wofford College, the team contributes over two million dollars annually to the Spartanburg community; and in 2012 alone, over forty‑four thousand people attended the Panthers Training Camp, generating millions of dollars for South Carolina's economy; and

Whereas, the Carolina Panthers organization has made all residents of the Carolinas proud to call them their own over their twenty years of existence, and particularly when they earned their spot in NFL Super Bowl XXXVIII; and

Whereas, the Carolina Panthers annually provide 75 programs that reach 2,700 schools and nonprofit organizations and 300,000 young people throughout the Carolinas every year, providing assistance and support to a wide variety of organizations in South Carolina; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina General Assembly are grateful for the economic contribution and the enthusiasm for professional sports that the Carolina Panthers and Jerry Richardson have brought to the Palmetto State and for the pride and recognition they have given to our region. The citizens of South Carolina are privileged to join our friends and neighbors in North Carolina in cheering on the team and sharing in the joy of its success. Now, therefore,

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

That the members of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, by this resolution, recognize and honor the Carolina Panthers football team and team owner, Jerry Richardson, for their outstanding efforts as part of the National Football League and for their significant and meaningful impact on the culture and economy of the Palmetto State.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to Jerry Richardson.

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