**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE REVEREND MICHAEL WALLACE BEARDEN, FORMER PASTOR OF FOUNTAIN INN FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT AFTER TWENTY‑FIVE YEARS OF FAITHFUL SERVICE TO HIS CONGREGATION AND HIS GOD.

Whereas, it is with great pleasure that the South Carolina House of Representatives honors those individuals who give tirelessly of themselves to succor the souls of men; and

Whereas, the Reverend Michael Wallace Bearden, former pastor of Fountain Inn First Baptist Church, stands among their number as an outstanding minister of the Gospel, one much admired by colleagues, congregation, and area residents at large; and

Whereas, in preparation for his calling, Michael Wallace Bearden graduated from Anderson College and Erskine College. He pursued further studies at Southwestern Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, where he earned a master of divinity in 1974; and

Whereas, licensed to preach in 1968 and ordained the following year by Concord Baptist Church in Anderson, he served as associate pastor and youth director at Varennes Heights Baptist Church in the same city. While in seminary, he served as interim pastor for several churches, later taking up his duties as pastor of Cedar Creek Baptist Church of Hartwell, Georgia, in 1974; and

Whereas, following a pastorate at Corinth Baptist Church in Gaffney, Reverend Bearden commenced his long and honored ministry at Fountain Inn First Baptist in 1987; and

Whereas, during his years at Fountain Inn First Baptist, he started the church’s first structured visitation program, oversaw the construction of additional Sunday School rooms and a new fellowship hall, led the campaign to purchase adjoining property for the purpose of acquiring additional church parking, saw to the purchase of a thirty‑nine passenger motorcoach and fourteen‑passenger bus, and oversaw the renovation of the sanctuary, which was dedicated in May 2005; and

Whereas, Reverend Bearden considers it his greatest good fortune to have met and married Iris Wilson Bearden, his dear wife of nearly forty‑three years and helpmate in raising their three fine children, Carrie, Daniel, and Jeremy. These three have given their parents the joy of three delightful grandchildren; and

Whereas, noted as a humble, courageous man of Christian character, one of whom it truly may be said, “Well done, good and faithful servant,” Reverend Bearden has demonstrated to others how to be “steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord”; and

Whereas, having served the Lord faithfully as a pastor for a total of forty‑three years and Fountain Inn for a quarter century, he retired on December 30, 2012, leaving his church very well situated and debt free; and

Whereas, the House trusts that his days of retirement will find Reverend Bearden more frequently able to indulge in hunting, fishing, and gardening; and

Whereas, the House of Representatives, grateful for Reverend Bearden’s outstanding ministry to the congregation of Fountain Inn First Baptist Church and his example of godly manhood, wishes him God’s richest blessings as he continues to serve the Lord. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, recognize and honor the Reverend Michael Wallace Bearden, former pastor of Fountain Inn First Baptist Church, on the occasion of his retirement after twenty‑five years of faithful service to his congregation and his God.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to the Reverend Michael Wallace Bearden.

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