**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE RIGHT REVEREND DR. RICHARD FRANKLIN NORRIS, THE 116TH CONSECRATED BISHOP OF THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, AND HIS BELOVED WIFE, MOTHER MARY ANN NORRIS, FOR THEIR SIGNIFICANT SERVICE TO THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

Whereas, in 2012 at the Forty‑Ninth Quadrennial Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, Bishop Richard Franklin Norris was appointed to serve the Seventh Episcopal District, which encompasses the State of South Carolina; and

Whereas, in his early years, Bishop Norris’ family moved to Philadelphia, and after he graduated from West Philadelphia High School, he attended Morris Brown College, then transferred to and graduated from Rutgers University; and

Whereas, in answer to the call to ministry he had received at age fifteen, he attended the New Brunswick Theological Seminary and the New York Theological Seminary, where he earned a doctor of ministry degree; and

Whereas, in addition to numerous honorary doctorates, he has received fellowships from the Ford Foundation Urban Training Center (Chicago), Lilly Foundation, New York City Mission Society, and New York Theological Seminary; and

Whereas, from 1986 to 1993, Bishop Norris served as pastor of the Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church and from 1993 to 2000, he served the St. Matthews African American Episcopal Church both in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and in 2000, he was consecrated as the 116th AME Bishop; and

Whereas, he served the 14th Episcopal District in West Africa, encompassing Nigeria, Togo, Benin, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Cote D’Ivoire, where he led in spiritual and educational development and rebuilt churches, schools, and universities destroyed by the region’s ongoing unrest; and

Whereas, in June 2004, Bishop Norris was appointed to the First District, which includes the eastern half of Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, New England, and Bermuda; and

Whereas, his beloved wife and cherished companion for over forty years, Mother Mary Ann Norris, serves the AME Church in South Carolina as the Episcopal Supervisor of the First Episcopal District; and

Whereas, working tirelessly at all levels of church initiatives within the AME and beyond, Mother Norris initiated the “Adopt a Missionary Child” program under the Family Life Committee of the Women’s Missionary Society in New York; and

Whereas, an educator in New York City for twenty‑three years, she served as a teacher, counselor, and dean while rearing two fine sons with Bishop Norris. Their sons have blessed them with three devoted grandchildren; and

Whereas, their older son, Richard F. Norris II, is a successful computer company executive and an accomplished musician and music director in the First District, and their younger son, Reverend Marcellus Norris, is the pastor of historic St. Luke AME Church in Harlem, New York; and

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives appreciates the outstanding ministry that Bishop Richard Franklin Norris and Mother Mary Ann Norris have had worldwide, and the members are grateful for their dedicated service to the spiritual wellbeing of citizens in our State. 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 Right Reverend Dr. Richard Franklin Norris, the 116th consecrated bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and his beloved wife, Mother Mary Ann Norris, for their significant service to the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Right Reverend Dr. Richard Franklin Norris and Mother Mary Ann Norris.

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