**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND CONGRATULATE ZION BAPTIST CHURCH OF COLUMBIA ON THE OCCASION OF ITS HISTORIC ONE HUNDRED FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY AND TO COMMEND THE CHURCH FOR A CENTURY AND A HALF OF SERVICE TO GOD AND THE COMMUNITY.

Whereas, having been founded in 1865, Zion Baptist Church of Columbia is celebrating its historic one hundred fiftieth anniversary in 2015; and

Whereas, with the revolutionary changes heralded by Reconstruction and at the behest of Reverend Sancho Taylor in his dying request, Zion Baptist Church, formerly known as the First African Baptist Church, was organized in 1865 at a humble dwelling in the 1400 block of Gadsden Street. Its congregation worshiped there until 1871 under the pastorate of Reverend Frank Dobbins, who shepherded a membership of twenty‑five; and

Whereas, on a lot at the corner of Washington and Gadsden streets, Zion Baptist erected in 1871 a house of worship, a wooden church that held seventy‑five men and sixty‑five women. The new church was host to the unveiling of much South Carolina history; and

Whereas, in April 1888, the State Baptist Women Missionary and Educational Convention (first annual session) was organized at Zion Baptist Church. In July 1906, the Committee of Twenty Four, which was appointed by the Baptist Educational, Missionary, and Sunday School Convention of South Carolina at one of its sessions, met at Zion Baptist Church for the purpose of finding a location and opening a college for the education of “negro youth.” In 1907, a second meeting of the Committee of Twenty Four was held at Zion. In October 1912, the Baptist Educational and Missionary Convention of South Carolina met at Zion and elected Dr. J.J. Starts as president of Morris College; and

Whereas, in 1916, Zion Baptist Church built a new edifice costing sixty thousand dollars, as well as a wooden parsonage. In 1919, the Gethsemane Baptist Women’s Education and Missionary Convention of South Carolina was organized at Zion Baptist Church. The National Baptist Sunday School Congress met in June 1936 at Zion, with thousands of delegates attending. Further, in 1930, Dr. Matilda Evans, the first African‑American woman to have a medical practice in the State, started a free clinic in Zion’s basement, and in 1936 the National Baptist Convention of America met at the church; and

Whereas, during the 1950s and 1960s, Zion Baptist contributed to the liberation of African Americans by serving as a focal point for many Civil Rights activities. In March 1961, more than two hundred African‑American students met at Zion before beginning their march to the State House to protest racial segregation. Police arrested many protesters and charged them with breach of the peace. The U.S. Supreme Court overturned the convictions and confirmed that a state could not “make criminal the peaceful expression of unpopular views” in the case *Edwards v. S.C.* (1963); and

Whereas, among many other significant events connected with the church, in March 1984 Columbia City Council authorized the listing of Zion Baptist Church in the City’s archives in recognition of the church’s rich historical background, and an appropriate marker was placed at the front of the church; and

Whereas, Zion Baptist Church has been a beacon of light and a community worship center in the Columbia area for one hundred fifty years, and, God willing, will continue its godly heritage for many more years of worship and service. 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 congratulate Zion Baptist Church of Columbia on the occasion of its historic one hundred fiftieth anniversary and commend the church for a century and a half of service to God and the community.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to Zion Baptist Church.

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