**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE SOUTH CAROLINA MORTICIANS ASSOCIATION FOR THE OUTSTANDING SERVICE THESE DEDICATED MORTUARY PROFESSIONALS PERFORM FOR THE CITIZENS OF THE PALMETTO STATE AND TO CONGRATULATE THEM UPON THE NINETIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THEIR SIGNIFICANT WORK THROUGH THE ASSOCIATION.

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives is pleased to learn that the South Carolina Morticians Association will celebrate nine decades of meaningful service and compassionate assistance to families throughout our great State; and

Whereas, in late 1924, E. N. Isom of Chester conceived the idea of an association of funeral homes owned by black directors and shared his vision about possible benefits until a consensus grew; and

Whereas, the first meeting was held at Zion Baptist Church in Columbia, and undertakers continued to meet under the direction of the Independent National Funeral Directors Association; and

Whereas, from these meetings grew what was initially called the Colored Funeral Directors and Embalmers Association of South Carolina with Columbia’s Willis C. Johnson the first president; and

Whereas, the first meeting attendees included Eugene Gadsden, Julius P. L. Fielding, Eddie C. Mickel, and Jacob G. Moultrie, all of Charleston; T. A. Williams and Pearl Williams of Newberry; E. A. Bythewood of Orangeburg; J. E. Spann of Chester; T. H. Pinckney of Columbia; A. A. Alston of Georgetown; and Edmund Perry Palmer of Sumter; and

Whereas, from the 1900s to the 1940s, the State Board of Embalmers allowed anyone to open a funeral home as long the person was a licensed embalmer, paving the way for black entrepreneurs to become funeral home directors; and

Whereas, the number of black embalmers grew, and many more funeral homes were established through the 1940s and 1950s. From the 1950s to the 1970s, funeral directors served as business leaders in the community, state, and nation, and the association became a catalyst for social justice on the state and national levels; and

Whereas, under the leadership of Charles Mason, the association was renamed the South Carolina Morticians Association, Inc. (SCMA) during the 1960s and was divided into districts to allow closer contact among its members; and

Whereas, South Carolina gained prominence when Richard Haile, Jr., of Camden, was elected president of the National Funeral Directors and Morticians Association (NFDMA) in 1960, of which the SCMA is a member; and

Whereas, each year the SCMA hosts an annual convention, beginning the week after Mother’s Day, to elect state officers. A governor and secretary from each district serve on the state board of directors, and district officers manage their district’s affairs; and

Whereas, the association’s legislative committee studies legislative matters affecting the profession, and the association holds frequent workshops and seminars to keep members informed about state funeral laws and regulations that help them remain compliant; and

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives appreciates the distinguished and highly‑regarded contributions that the South Carolina Morticians Association and its members have made to this State and join with them in celebrating ninety years of service to their communities. 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 South Carolina Morticians Association for the outstanding service these dedicated mortuary professionals perform for the citizens of the Palmetto State and congratulate them upon the ninetieth anniversary of their significant work through the association.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to Mr. A. Glen Crawford III, President of the South Carolina Morticians Association.

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