**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND COMMEND THE OUTSTANDING LEGACY AND FINE PROFESSIONAL TRADITION OF J. W. WOODWARD FUNERAL HOME OF SPARTANBURG AND TO CONGRATULATE THE FAMILY OWNERS AND STAFF AS THEY CELEBRATE ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SERVING FAMILIES WITH DIGNITY AND COMPASSION.

Whereas, in 1916, J. F. Floyd of Floyd Mortuary in Spartanburg suggested that John Woodward and several associates organize a local mortuary for citizens of color; and

Whereas, born in 1873, John Woodward, a farmer whose family originated in Fairfield County, opened J. W. Woodward Funeral Home. It first was located on Short Wofford Street in Spartanburg and moved to its current location on Howard Street in 1946, which had formerly housed a hospital for people of color; and

Whereas, when John Woodward died in 1947, his son John Stinson Woodward, a graduate of Renard College of Mortuary Science in New York, assumed ownership of J. W. Woodward Funeral Home. Another son, Lawrence, moved to Brooklyn, New York, and founded the Lawrence H. Woodward Funeral Home; and

Whereas, John Stinson Woodward operated J. W. Woodward Funeral Home for most of his life, pioneering as a licensed funeral director and embalmer in the State for more than seventy‑five years. He also provided many other services to African-Americans in the Spartanburg community not available to them at the time; and

Whereas, by 1980, his daughter, Kay Elizabeth Woodward, was part‑owner of the mortuary and obtained her funeral director’s license. In 1985, she joined the mortuary staff full‑time as its vice president after leaving her professorship in the psychology department at Converse College; and

Whereas, when her father died in 2002, Ms. Woodward became president and sole owner of the mortuary and has held her funeral director license for thirty-five years; and

Whereas, her son, James Cleveland Ferguson, Jr., has supported the family business since 2005, and her daughter, Stinson Woodward Ferguson, a licensed attorney, is an apprentice funeral director at the family business, having left a private law firm to join the mortuary full‑time in 2015; and

Whereas, Reverend William E. Smith, a licensed funeral director, has served the mortuary for forty‑five years and still does today; and

Whereas, two of John Stinson Woodward’s nephews, the late Walter C. Woodward and the late George Herman Woodward supported the family business for many years. Dedicated employees, including the late Albert Crawford, the late Ada Parks Owens, and the late Donald Cheatham, each served the mortuary for decades; and

Whereas, serving and employing citizens of different ethnic, religious, and social backgrounds, J. W. Woodward Funeral Home is the oldest African‑American business in Spartanburg and is celebrating its centennial anniversary during 2016; and

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives is profoundly grateful for the centennial legacy of J. W. Woodward Funeral Home, and the members honor the dignity and compassion that have defined and distinguished the courteous and professional service of the Woodward family. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the House of Representatives of the State of South Carolina, by this resolution, recognize and commend the outstanding legacy and fine professional tradition of J. W. Woodward Funeral Home of Spartanburg and congratulate the family owners and staff as they celebrate one hundred years of serving families with dignity and compassion.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to the family of J. W. Woodward.

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