**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO REMEMBER AND CELEBRATE THE LIFE OF THEODORE B. THOMAS, JR., (1923‑2014) AND TO HONOR HIS STRONG COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION, COACHING, CHRISTIAN MINISTRY, AND PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY SERVICE.

Whereas, born in Orangeburg in 1923, Theodore B. Thomas, Jr., was the son of the Reverend and Mrs. Theodore B. Thomas, Sr. He devoted his life to the church, his family, community and public service, and teaching young people to realize their full potential; and

Whereas, after high school, the young T.B. Thomas received a full scholarship to South Carolina State College, where he earned All‑American football honors. In 1944, his college studies were interrupted by his service in the U.S. Army during World War II. While in the military, he participated in the Pacific Olympics in the spring of 1945, winning a bronze medal in the discus competition. Returning home to complete his college education, he graduated from South Carolina State University in 1947, and completed his master’s degree at Indiana University; and

Whereas, prior to moving to Hartsville and teaching at Butler High School in 1950, T.B. Thomas served as dean of men and assistant coach at Claflin University. A teacher for more than thirty years at Butler High, he served as president of the Darlington Teachers Association and Darlington County Education Association and retired from the school system in 1982. While at Butler, he also served as athletic director and head coach, amassing a basketball record of 584‑144. During his career, he was South Carolina’s nominee for National Basketball Coach of the Year, took home four football conference titles and two state basketball titles, and received the State Basketball Coach of the Year award. Among his many other honors, Coach Thomas was one of sixty‑five players inducted into the South Carolina State University Athletic Hall of Fame. In 2007, he was recognized as one of the 100 Most Outstanding Players in the long and storied history of South Carolina State University; and

Whereas, among his athletes and fans, it was widely known that Coach Thomas believed in discipline. Many of his former players have said that he was a father figure to them, giving them money for haircuts, shoes, and clothes. They often speak of how he took them under his wing by his wise advice and kindness. The lessons he taught them are still being applied by his players today; and

Whereas, heeding the call to Christian ministry, T.B. Thomas became a licensed minister in the Methodist Church in 1947. He served as a pastor in a number of appointments until 2002, when he fully retired. As part of his civic contributions, in 1985 he won a Hartsville City Council seat and quickly gained the reputation of being a businesslike problem solver. In 1999, he was named Greater Hartsville Chamber Citizen of the Year. After he retired from city council in 2007, city officials formally named a $2.2 million facility, Coach T.B. Thomas Sports Center, in his honor in 2008; and

Whereas, on the home front, Coach Thomas and his dear wife, the former Lovis Rebecca Thompson, worked together in the church and community on many boards and commissions to make the community a better place to live. God blessed their marriage with two children, Brandolyn Thomas Pinkston and Dr. Theodore Brandon Thomas III; and

Whereas, grateful for the legacy of consistent dedication and excellence T.B. Thomas bestowed on this great State, the House takes great pleasure in remembering his committed labors on behalf of the people of South Carolina and in adding its warmest commendation to the many encomiums that have flowed in over the years to this distinguished educator, coach, minister, and public and community servant. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, remember and celebrate the life of Theodore B. Thomas, Jr., (1923‑2014) and honor his strong commitment to education, coaching, Christian ministry, and public and community service.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Theodore B. Thomas, Jr.

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