**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO CELEBRATE THE LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF SOUTH CAROLINA NATIVE BLUE SKY, RENOWNED AMERICAN PAINTER AND SCULPTOR AND BELOVED CREATOR OF COLUMBIA’S FAMOUS “TUNNELVISION” MURAL.

Whereas, recognizing the widespread appreciation the general public, as well as the art world, has for Columbia‑born painter and sculptor Blue Sky, the South Carolina House of Representatives is pleased to pay tribute to this internationally famed American artist; and

Whereas, born on September 18, 1938, as Warren Edward Johnson, Blue Sky acquired his earliest acclaim as an artist by winning a national poster competition in 1954, two years before he graduated from Columbia’s Dreher High School. For the next six years, he served as a jet‑aircraft technician in the Air National Guard, 169th Cameron Squad, while working as a parade‑float builder, layout artist, and dance instructor to pay college expenses; and

Whereas, while earning a bachelor’s degree at the University of South Carolina, he sold original works through USC student art auctions. At the Springs Mills Show in 1964, in which more than seven hundred artists participated, he was judged “Best of Show” by Henry Geldzahler, then curator of modern art at the Metropolitan Museum. The artist then was invited to study at the Art Students League of New York, where he lived and worked for a year; and

Whereas, on moving back to Columbia in 1966, he worked as a draftsman and conceptual artist before returning to USC for graduate school. In 1970, he graduated with a master’s degree and in 1974 legally changed his name to Blue Sky; and

Whereas, in 2000, Blue Sky was awarded the Order of the Palmetto, South Carolina’s highest civilian honor, for his contributions to the arts, particularly for painting the state’s first large‑scale public mural, the iconic “Tunnelvision” (1975). Located on an exterior wall of the old AgFirst Farm Credit Bank building, the mural depicts a view through a stone‑carved tunnel that looks toward a descending sun. This trompe‑l’œil mural has earned Blue Sky his widest recognition, beginning with a February 1976 article in *People* magazine. The artist has fully repainted the mural five times; and

Whereas, in addition to “Tunnelvision,” Blue Sky has completed an impressive array of public murals and sculptures, among them the murals “Moonlight on the Great Pee Dee” (John L. McMillan Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse, Florence), “Overflow Parking” (*Flint Journal* Building, Flint, Michigan), “Spirit of the Air” (Charlotte, North Carolina), “Full Moon Over the River Jordan” (New Hope Church, Pelion), “Gervais Street Extension” (South Carolina State Museum, Columbia), and “Night Train” (Fort Pierce, Florida), as well as the public sculptures “NEVERBUST” (Main Street, Columbia) and “Busted Plug Plaza” (the old AgFirst Farm Credit Bank building, Columbia); and

Whereas, of Blue Sky’s work, Belgian art‑history author Birgit Krols offers this praise: “[Blue Sky is] one of the most remarkable artists from the past, present, and future of 3D street art.” Henry Geldzahler of the Metropolitan Museum of Art declares Blue Sky’s paintings “fresh and bold… His work has both the technical ability and the freshness of vision, the feeling that something familiar is being seen for the first time, that has produced some of the best American painting of the past ten years…”; and

Whereas, the members of the House, themselves among Blue Sky’s legion of admirers, take great pleasure in saluting this master artist and look forward to seeing his legacy continued and enlarged in the years to come. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, celebrate the life and achievements of South Carolina native Blue Sky, renowned American painter and sculptor and beloved creator of Columbia’s famous “Tunnelvision” mural.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Blue Sky.

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