**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO CONGRATULATE HELEN WHITE OF MARION COUNTY UPON THE OCCASION OF HER ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH BIRTHDAY AND TO WISH HER MUCH HAPPINESS IN THE DAYS AHEAD.

Whereas, the members of the Senate are delighted to learn that Mrs. Helen White of Fort Lawn celebrated her one hundred eighth birthday on September 21, 2014; and

Whereas, Mrs. White, the daughter of the late William Leslie and Martha Mary “Mattye” (Williams) Abernathy, was born on September 21, 1906 and spent most of her early years in Fort Lawn where her father was the mayor for twenty years; and

Whereas, a middle child of eight children, her family enjoyed many personal, educational, and economic advantages and subsequently all eight children graduated from college and several earned advanced degrees; and

Whereas, Ms. White’s family was actively involved in their church and community. Helping other people was the hallmark of their philosophy, which led them to run a soup kitchen for the community during the flu epidemic of 1918 and to provide food, clothing, and transportation for anyone who needed it; and

Whereas, Helen was, and is now, strong willed, and someone who has forward looking ideas. As a young person, she loved clambering up a pole to pull the cord that turned on the streetlights of the village and as a teenager she drove the car for her father to visit his business and political contacts. She enjoyed playing tennis and dancing. As a college student at Flora McDonald College in Red Springs, North Carolina, she took her first airplane ride in an open cockpit single engine plane; and

Whereas, Helen earned a degree in home economics and taught English, math, and home economics, and coached the girls’ basketball team, in rural Centenary, South Carolina. She then began working as an assistant home demonstration agent in Florence County. After she and Harry White married on Christmas Day in 1933, the couple lived in Clemson where he worked in agricultural extension services at the college; and

Whereas, after the birth of their daughter, Jerri Sandra White, Ms. White became a homemaker. But once the Great Depression began to worsen, she returned to the workforce, with the WPA, to pioneer school lunch programs, nursery projects in industry, gardening and canning projects, and in-home services for indigent families. She supervised these WPA operations in nine counties in western South Carolina; and

Whereas, the family then lived in North Carolina for a year as Harry, Sr. completed an advanced degree at NCSU. Moving to Georgia just before the birth of their son, Harry A. White, Jr., Helen was again a homemaker and church and school volunteer. She later completed some coursework in early childhood education at UGA, but a move to North Carolina ended these studies; and

Whereas, in Raleigh in the 1960s and 1970s, Helen taught home economics briefly at Needham Broughton High School and then at the Governor Morehead School (School for the Blind) for sixteen years. This position was a challenge as she taught blind students how to cook, sew, clean, care for children, and maintain a house; and

Whereas, soon after her retirement, the Whites moved to Marion County where her husband lived as a child and she had her first job. During her early retirement years, she spent a lot of her time caring for her husband, who was in declining health. They were able to travel, visiting the Caribbean several times. Since his death in 1984, she has also traveled in the States and to the Caribbean, Canada, England, and her ancestral Scotland, among other places; and

Whereas, Helen’s mission and forte in life has been to serve others, and she has done that in a number of ways, not only individually and through her work but also through church and service organizations. A person who reaches out to people in any and all circumstances, she is a respected and loved member of the communities where she and her children and grandchildren live. Locally she has served in church offices, as honorary president of the Women of the Church, and as a member of a seniors group, the Pee Dee Chapter of the South Carolina Genealogical Society, Friends of the Marion County Museum, and other organizations; and

Whereas, although “Miss Helen” is a little hard of hearing, she is in remarkable health for her age. She still manages her business affairs, pays bills, and makes decisions about upkeep of her home and property and keeps everyone informed on political issues; and

Whereas, the members of the Senate are pleased to honor this daughter of South Carolina on the occasion of her one hundred eighth birthday and the members join with her family and friends in congratulating her on reaching this extraordinary milestone. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the Senate, by this resolution, congratulate Helen White upon the occasion of her one hundred eighth birthday and wish her much happiness in the days ahead.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Mrs. Helen White.

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