**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO EXPRESS THE PROFOUND SORROW OF THE MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA SENATE UPON THE DEATH OF LESLIE ANN PIERCE OF COLUMBIA AND TO EXTEND THE DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO HER FAMILY AND MANY FRIENDS.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina Senate were deeply saddened to learn of the untimely death of Leslie Ann Pierce, who passed away in Columbia on June 28, 2015, at the age of forty‑nine; and

Whereas, born in St. Petersburg, Florida, on December 24, 1965, Leslie was the daughter of Dr. Margaret Ann Leslie Pierce‑Jeter and the late George Amos Pierce, Jr.; and

Whereas, Leslie lived part of her childhood in Jacksonville, Florida, where she attended Bartram School for Girls and was a member of All Saints Episcopal Church. When Leslie’s family moved to Due West in 1980, she attended Dixie High School and graduated from that institution in 1984. For the next two years, she attended Erskine College, after which she transferred to Winthrop University and earned a bachelor’s degree in studio art. In further preparation for her life’s work, Leslie attended Florida State University in Tallahassee, where she took graduate coursework in art history before moving to Columbia in 1991; and

Whereas, despite having suffered a near‑fatal car accident and having become a paraplegic at age twenty‑one, Leslie overcame many physical challenges and led an exemplary, independent, and productive life. She was an accomplished artist and helped make Columbia and its art museum a vibrant and welcoming place for so many to enjoy art and music. Her courageous attitude and positive outlook were an inspiration to all who knew her; and

Whereas, during her tenure at the Columbia Museum of Art, Leslie achieved great success. She began her career there almost twenty years ago as a volunteer docent and through her passion, commitment, and dedication to the museum rose through the ranks to become an art educator to adults and children and later a senior manager and the director of adult programming and partnerships. Her work at the museum was the driving force in her life and a platform for her limitless creative ideas. She enjoyed everyone with whom she worked and enjoyed collaborating with the countless local, national, and international musicians and artists whom she invited to Columbia and the Columbia Museum of Art. Leslie strove to make art accessible to everyone by creating innovative programs, diverse lectures, poetry readings, gallery tours, and all kinds of musical concerts in order to invite new audiences and make all people feel welcome at the museum; and

Whereas, Leslie had a gift for inspiring others and making each person around her feel special. She had a light that drew people to her and lifted them up with a welcoming smile and generous attitude. A good listener, she asked varied questions about people’s homes, families, interests, schools, and work. She never met a stranger, had a cheerful word for everyone, and was bound and determined to find a connection with each person she met. She looked for ways to create opportunities for others to share their talents and loved collaborating with diverse individuals and groups. She ended every conversation with an invitation to the Columbia Museum of Art; and

Whereas, a lady who loved life and lived it to the fullest, Leslie possessed a “can‑do” attitude that made every day fun and filled it with laughter, humor, and her dry wit; and

Whereas, Leslie spent much of her time making beautiful objects such as wood‑burned and painted gourds, watercolor and oil paintings, sculptures, prints, drawings, and collages, and she shared much of her art with others. Her many friends active in Columbia’s art scene will attest that she was a generous patron and supporter. Leslie displayed her art in numerous independent art shows, juried art events, and private collections throughout South Carolina. As a leader in the Columbia arts community for more than twenty‑four years, she was a dedicated supporter of the theatre, ballet, symphony, concert venues, museums, local galleries, and individuals; and

Whereas, a devoted sister and daughter who loved her family, her friends, and her many pets, Leslie Ann Pierce leaves to cherish her memory her mother, Peggy Jeter; her stepfather, Gus Jeter; her two sisters, Patricia Pierce and Virginia Pierce; and her many friends. Her family is very proud of her and loved her very much, and she will be greatly missed by all who had the privilege of knowing and working with her. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, express their profound sorrow upon the death of Leslie Ann Pierce of Columbia and extend the deepest sympathy to her family and many friends.

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