**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE CLAFLIN UNIVERSITY WOMEN’S SOFTBALL TEAM AND COACHES FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY SEASON AND TO CONGRATULATE THEM FOR WINNING THE 2017 SOUTHERN INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE.

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives is pleased to learn that the members of the Claflin University women’s softball team from Orangeburg took the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SIAC) title in the competition held at Diamond Lakes Regional Park in Hephzibah, Georgia, on Saturday, May 6, 2017; and

Whereas, although Claflin University and Miles College entered the final game of the SIAC series as the number one seeds in their respective divisions, the Claflin Lady Panthers defeated the competitive Miles College Golden Bears 13‑5 in six innings to take home the team’s first SIAC trophy; and

Whereas, after the top of the first inning, the Golden Bears held a 4‑0 lead in the championship game, but the Lady Panthers answered with a run in the bottom of the first and five more in the second inning to take a 6‑4 edge over Miles; and

Whereas, the Golden Bears added another run in the third inning, reducing the Claflin lead to 6‑5, the last run that Miles College would post in the championship game; and

Whereas, Claflin posted a pair of runs in the bottom of the third and stretched the Lady Panthers’ advantage to 8‑5, but if the fourth inning gave Miles College hope when both teams failed to score in the fourth inning, Claflin dashed those hopes in the fifth with steady offensive pressure that produced four more runs for a 12‑5 lead; and

Whereas, for the last three innings, the indomitable Claflin defense held the Golden Bears scoreless, and the offense added a final run in the sixth inning, a lucky 13‑5 for Claflin in the final tally; and

Whereas, on the mound, Tiaria Norman tossed four games for the Lady Panthers, all wins, and she was named the 2017 SIAC Softball Tournament Most Valuable Performer, finishing with nineteen strikeouts to lead the tournament, seven of them against Miles; and

Whereas, teammates Chelsea Hall and Shaquailla German joined her on the All‑Tournament Team, and Head Coach James “Marty” Kinard was named the Outstanding Coach of the Tournament; and

Whereas, the Lady Panthers ended their season with an impressive 33‑18 record and a SIAC trophy, and earned a spot at the NCAA Division II South Regional tournament on May 11‑13; and

Whereas, in a sport that demands strength, strategy, and quickness, Head Coach Marty Kinard and his skilled coaching staff maximized their own experience and passion to produce a championship‑caliber team and teach these athletes lessons that will prove invaluable through life both on and off the diamond; and

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives appreciates the pride and recognition that the Claflin University women’s softball players have brought to their school and our State, and the members look to hear of their continued achievements. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, recognize and honor the Claflin University women’s softball team and coaches for an extraordinary season and congratulate them for winning the 2017 Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Championship title.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Coach James “Marty” Kinard.

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