**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO EXPRESS THE PROFOUND SORROW OF THE MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES UPON THE PASSING OF JAMES L. BURNETT OF SPARTANBURG AND TO EXTEND THE DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO HIS FAMILY AND MANY FRIENDS.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives were deeply saddened by the passing of James L. Burnett of Spartanburg on November 23, 2017, at the age of ninety‑four; and

Whereas, a son of Connie Lee Burnett and Minnie Jane Burnett, James was born September 26, 1923, in Spartanburg County and grew up there surrounded by relatives. He was educated at Boiling Springs High School, Southern Wesleyan University, and Robinson Business College; and

Whereas, James began his career at Draper Corporation in Spartanburg but soon moved to work for the Clinchfield Railroad. His mentor was his grandfather, J.R. Burnett. World War II brought his civilian career to a halt, but it also added an amazing chapter to his life: He entered the U.S. Army at Fort Jackson but never went through basic training. He was waiting for a spot in the pilot training program when the losses of D‑Day brought a new urgency for more infantry. James was part of the 106th Infantry and became the company clerk, as the officers and sergeants finally understood he still had not fired a gun in the Army; and

Whereas, soon shipped to England, James and the 106th faced German lines by mid December 1944. James had a deep foxhole and a gun, but he was on the front lines of the Battle of the Bulge. The German attack quickly flanked the 106th, and on December 19, 1944, James was captured. He arrived on Christmas Eve in the spa town of Bad Orb, which had a notorious prison camp with twenty thousand prisoners. By the time General George C. Patton’s troops liberated the camp, James, being critically ill, was shipped out to Paris. He received the Medal of Honor as a prisoner of war; and

Whereas, throughout his long life, James Burnett took advantage of many business opportunities with skill, hard work, and an awareness of long‑term demands and the unexpected. He first went to work for his grandfather, a cotton merchant. James bought out a plumbing contractor and became a master plumber; and

Whereas, he often partnered with his younger brother Paul Burnett. They began a trucking business to move cotton from gins to mills in the area and created housing to meet the demands of the postwar era. James and Paul got into the peach business with about five hundred acres of peach trees. Then, James started Burnett TV and Appliance and later opened Ace Hardware and the Hummingbird Store. Next, he operated Ace Finance Company and Ace TV Rental Corporation. In the 1980s, he was named Spartanburg Businessman of the Year. In the 1990s and until 2010, James developed six subdivisions on the west side of Spartanburg; and

Whereas, away from the office, James was a member of the Lions Club and SEBA. As a man of faith, he served as a deacon at Southside and First Baptist churches and was a member of First Presbyterian Church. He enjoyed fishing and traveling; and

Whereas, he leaves to cherish his memory his beloved daughters Janet Burnett McLeskey and Nancy Burnett Mackey; grandsons Jason L. McLeskey, James L. McLeskey, Alexander Mackey, great‑grandsons Jackson McLeskey and Matthew McLeskey; and a host of other family members and friends. He will be greatly missed. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, express their profound sorrow upon the passing of James L. Burnett of Spartanburg and extend the deepest sympathy to his family and many friends.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to the Burnett family.

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