**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO HONOR AND CELEBRATE THE LIFE OF ROLLINS EDWARDS AND TO EXPRESS THE SINCEREST OF CONDOLENCES TO HIS LARGE AND LOVING FAMILY AND MANY FRIENDS.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives determine it altogether appropriate to pause in their deliberations to honor the life of Rollins Edwards and offer their sincere sympathy to his family and friends; and

Whereas, Rollins Edwards was born in Charleston on March 5, 1922, and raised on Pidgeon Bay Road in Summerville by his loving parents, the late John and Annie Edwards. He attended the Banks and Alston schools in Summerville, and later, he attended the Stanley Specter and Berkley School of Music in Massachusetts; and

Whereas, Mr. Edwards started working at the Summerville Laundry at an early age. After high school, he worked at the Navy yard until he was drafted into the United States Army in January 1944. He went to serve in both the European and Pacific theaters of World War II. Upon returning from the war, he moved to Boston and became an accomplished musician, playing with big bands including The Count Basie Band, Willis Jackson Band, Buddy Johnson Band, and The Eskern Hawkins Band. After twelve years on the road, he returned home and opened his own dry cleaners with his late wife, Lucille Edwards. Thirty‑nine years later he retired, closing the business on January 15, 2000, making it the longest established African‑American owned and operated dry cleaners in Summerville; and

Whereas, on June 23, 1994, he received the Order of the Palmetto from Governor Carroll A. Campbell, Jr., naming him as a Palmetto Gentleman for his leadership. Additionally, he was the first African American to be elected to the Dorchester County Council, where he served for five years and two of those years as vice‑chairman. He went on to be elected to the Summerville Town Council on December 14, 1988, for which he served twelve years; and

Whereas, Mr. Edwards was a member of Baum’s Temple A.M.E. Zion Church in Summerville. He served many years as the senior choir director and was on the Trustee Board for forty‑two years; and

Whereas, in 2003, he became one of the founders of The Blessed Vision Ministry, Inc., of Summerville, where he served as a trustee and assistant administrator; and

Whereas, he was very active in Prince Hall Masons worldwide. He was a thirty‑three degree Mason and fraternally affiliated with New Eden Lodge #329, where he was a past Master Emeritus. Furthermore, he was an honorary member of African Lodge #459 in Boston, George A. McGuire Holy Royal Arch Masons #48, George Washington Carver Consistory #162, and a member of the United Supreme Council, David L. Muckel thirty‑three degree class of 1975, South Carolina Council of Deliberation, and Pride of McDaniel Chapter #334 OES. Along with participating with these organizations, he was also involved with the Knights of Pythagoras. Under his leadership, the Knights of Pythagoras rose from three to forty‑two chapters. He also holds the title of past Imperial Potentate for the Ancient Egyptian Arabic Order Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, and past Grand Master for the State of South Carolina Prince Hall Masons, with a membership of over twenty thousand men when he served. He was recently inducted into the Prince Hall Grand Lodge Hall of Fame and became a Sovereign Grand Inspector General; and

Whereas, in 2017, Professor Michael T. Owens published a book about Mr. Edwards entitled *“BURNED Conversations with a Black WWII Veteran”* detailing his life during the war; and

Whereas, Mr. Edwards married the late Lucille Edwards after the war, becoming the stepfather of the late Ellemina Rivers. He found love a second time and married Juanita Duren Denson on August 7, 1983. He became the stepfather of Marcelle Regina (Gina) Denson and the late Roy Denson; grandfather to Lawrence Rivers, Anthony Rivers, Harvey J. Denson, Reshay Cordes, and Christina N. Denson; great grandfather of Isaiah Castillo, Jeremiah A. Castillo, and LJ Reshay Cordes. Others close to him include his niece Beverly Fishburn Emanuel, goddaughters Sarah E. Queeman, Belita Donzella Mayes Green, LuTricia James Overton, Denise Duffie McCants, cousin Eugene (Agnes) Evans, sister‑in‑law Mamie Duren Benson, and special sons Patterson James and Michael T. Owens, along with many other beloved family members and friends. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, honor and celebrate the life of Rollins Edwards and express the sincerest of condolences to his large and loving family and many friends.

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

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