**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO CONGRATULATE DR. WENDELL ESTEP, PASTOR OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF COLUMBIA, ON HIS RETIREMENT AND TO COMMEND HIM FOR MORE THAN THREE DECADES OF EXTRAORDINARY LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE TO HIS CONGREGATION AND THE COLUMBIA COMMUNITY.

Whereas, it is altogether fitting and proper that the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives should pause in their deliberations to recognize Dr. Wendell Estep for his significant contributions to the people and the State of South Carolina; and

Whereas, the second longest‑serving pastor in the two hundred nine- year history of First Baptist Church of Columbia, Dr. Estep answered the call to serve the church in 1986; and

Whereas, since that time, Dr. Estep and his beloved wife, Lynda, have provided invaluable leadership for the First Baptist congregation and have dedicated more than thirty years of their lives in service to God at this historic church; and

Whereas, as a greatly respected leader in Columbia and the Midlands, Dr. Estep has participated in many community events and fostered relationships within the community, including his friendship with Dr. Charles B. Jackson, Sr., pastor of Brookland Baptist Church. Together, the two pastors are dedicated to improving race relations; and

Whereas, under Dr. Estep’s leadership, the campus of First Baptist Church has grown to cover an entire block, a campus that includes a sanctuary, music suite, children’s area, fellowship hall, educational space, family life center, student building, shared parking garage, and another building which houses a library and additional resources; and

Whereas, the church has also expanded its community outreach through events such as the Carolina Celebration of Liberty, the Columbia Christmas Pageant, Easter 2000, the Thanksgiving Feeding of the Hungry, A Night of Joy at Spirit Communications Park, and Profit and Loss luncheons for the business community; and

Whereas, five new churches have been established both in and near the Midlands under the guidance of First Baptist Church during his tenure, and the church’s television ministry has expanded to virtually all of the State, as well as areas of North Carolina and Georgia. The television ministry consistently receives top ratings from local stations; and

Whereas, the members of the House of Representatives of the State of South Carolina are deeply grateful for the ministry of Dr. Wendell Estep and for his faithful service to the community of Columbia and to the Palmetto State. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, congratulate Dr. Wendell Estep, pastor of First Baptist Church of Columbia, on his retirement and commend him for more than three decades of extraordinary leadership and service to his congregation and the Columbia community.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Dr. Wendell Estep.

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