**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO REMEMBER AND CELEBRATE THE LIFE OF DR. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN PAYTON AND TO HONOR HIS SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO ACADEMIA.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina General Assembly are pleased to learn that the life and legacy of Dr. Benjamin Franklin Payton will be commemorated at South Carolina State University on February 10, 2018; and

Whereas, Benjamin Payton was born in Orangeburg in 1932. He graduated with honors from South Carolina State University in 1955 with a bachelor’s degree in sociology. He earned a bachelor of divinity degree in philosophical theology from Harvard University in 1958, a master’s degree in philosophy of religion from Columbia University in 1960, and a doctorate in social ethics from Yale University in 1963; and

Whereas, Dr. Payton began his distinguished career when he joined the faculty of Howard University in 1963, as an assistant professor of sociology, religion, and social ethics, and also served as director of the institution’s Community Service Project in Washington, D.C. He then worked as the director of Office of Church and Race for the Protestant Council of the City of New York from 1965-1966, the executive director for the Commission on Religion and Race in the Department of Social Justice of the National Council of Churches in the U.S.A. from 1966-1967, the president of Benedict College from 1967-1972, and finally the program officer for Higher Education and Research with the Ford Foundation in New York City from 1972-1981; and

Whereas, Dr. Payton became the fifth president of the Tuskagee Institute in 1981, one hundred years after its founding. In his second year at Tuskegee, he served as educational advisor to Africa on a seven‑nation tour with Vice President George H. W.Bush. On his return, he encouraged the board of trustees to rename the institute Tuskagee University to clarify its mission and purpose, which the board approved in 1985; and

Whereas, in 1983, President Ronald Reagan appointed him to serve on the board for International Food and Agriculture Development, and he served as a team leader for the Presidential Task Force on Agriculture and Economic Development to Zaire in 1984. In 2002, President George W. Bush appointed him as the inaugural chair on the Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities; and

Whereas, Dr. Payton formed the Tuskegee Syphilis Study Legacy Committee in 1996 to seek a formal apology for the unethical use of African Americans as test subjects for the forty‑year study on the disease’s degenerative effects. In response, President Bill Clinton publicly apologized to participants of the study and their families, and announced the award of a two hundred thousand‑dollar grant to Tuskegee for a National Center for Bioethics in Research and Healthcare; and

Whereas, in 1998, he addressed the United States Congress, seeking status as a national historic site for Moton Field, the training grounds for the Tuskegee airmen, and Congress approved the field as a national historic site later that year; and

Whereas, Dr. Payton retired in August 2010, after almost three decades at Tuskegee, during which he led campus renovation and academic program restructuring projects, including development of its first doctoral programs, and helped raise more than one hundred sixty million dollars for the campus endowment; and

Whereas, he was married to the former Thelma Plane, who preceded him in death, and they were the parents of two remarkable children, Mark Steven and Deborah Elizabeth, and the grandparents of four adoring grandchildren. Dr. Payton died on September 28, 2016, at the age of eighty-three, leaving a legacy of improving the quality of higher education that continues to benefit our State. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring:

That the members of the South Carolina General Assembly, by this resolution, remember and celebrate the life of Dr. Benjamin Franklin Payton and honor his significant contributions to academia.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Dr. Benjamin Franklin Payton.

‑‑‑‑XX‑‑‑‑