**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND CELEBRATE THE SESQUICENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF THE MOST WORSHIPFUL PRINCE HALL GRAND LODGE OF SOUTH CAROLINA AND TO CONGRATULATE ITS MEMBERS STATEWIDE.

Whereas, founded by Prince Hall in 1784 and predominantly composed of African Americans, Prince Hall Freemasonry is a branch of North American Freemasonry with two main branches, the independent State Prince Hall Grand Lodges and those under the jurisdiction of the National Grand Lodge; and

Whereas, before the nation’s Revolutionary War, Prince Hall and fourteen other free black men petitioned for admittance to the white Boston St. John’s Lodge under colonial American Freemasonry and were declined. The Masonic fraternity appealed to many free blacks because of its foundational ideals of liberty, equality, and peace; and

Whereas, Prince Hall, along with others, requested and were accepted into Masonry through Lodge No. 441 of the Grand Lodge of Ireland in 1775, which was attached to the British forces stationed in Boston. African Lodge No. 1 was founded by some freedmen and Mr. Hall, who was elected Master; and

Whereas, when the military lodges left the area, the African Americans were given the authority to meet as a lodge with some Masonic privileges but could not perform essential functions of a fully operating lodge or create a charter; and

Whereas, the members applied to the Grand Lodge of England and were issued a charter for the African Lodge No. 1, the country’s first African Masonic lodge, which was renamed African Lodge No. 459 in 1784. In 1791, the Grand Lodge of England named Prince Hall, known as the father of African‑American Freemasonry, a Provincial Grand Master, and six years later, he organized a lodge in Philadelphia and then in Providence; and

Whereas, unable to attain integration, they concentrated on the recognition from white Masons that black Masonry descending from Prince Hall of Massachusetts was legitimate, hoping that recognition would lead ultimately to integration; and

Whereas, after Prince Hall’s death, the brethren organized African Grand Lodge in 1808, with the lodges from Philadelphia, Providence, and Boston, which was later renamed the Prince Hall Grand Lodge. After being denied acknowledgement in Massachusetts, African Lodge declared itself to be an independent Grand Lodge, the African Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, separate from all of the white Grand Lodges in the United States, and in 1827, declared its independence from the United Grand Lodge of England; and

Whereas, in 1868, the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Ancient York Masons of the State of South Carolina was formed and received its charter in 1869 at the National Grand Lodge meeting in Philadelphia. With the formation of the Grand Lodge, other lodges were established in the State. Just as Prince Hall had started in Freemasonry through a military lodge, so the Order spread during the period of Reconstruction throughout South Carolina; and

Whereas, some members who facilitated the formation of the state’s Grand Lodge, also served in the United States House of Representatives and in the South Carolina General Assembly; and

Whereas, in 1910, the Grand Lodge moved to Columbia, and in 1945, changed its name to The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of South Carolina. The construction of the current location on Gervais Street was completed in 1963; and

Whereas, the House of Representatives of the State of South Carolina celebrates the momentous milestone of the one hundred fiftieth anniversary of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge and wishes its members many more years of brotherhood in 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, recognize and celebrate the sesquicentennial anniversary of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of South Carolina and congratulate its members statewide.

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