**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO CONGRATULATE JAMES GIBSON ON THE OCCASION OF HIS NINETY‑SIXTH BIRTHDAY, AND TO WISH HIM A JOYOUS BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION AND MANY YEARS OF CONTINUED HEALTH AND HAPPINESS.

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives is delighted to learn that James Gibson of Saluda will celebrate his ninety‑sixth birthday at Rock Hill Baptist Church on March 16, 2019; and

Whereas, born on March 12, 1923, he has witnessed many remarkable social changes, technological advancements, and international conflicts that have spanned the globe from that time into the second decade of the twenty‑first century; and

Whereas, the third of six children of the late Mae Bell Dozier Gibson and Eddie Gibson, James Gibson attended Rosenwald School in Saluda and worked on a farm and a sawmill at a young age; and

Whereas, in his late teens, Mr. Gibson worked at Southern Construction Company, building air bases in Walterboro, and locations in Georgia and North Carolina; and

Whereas, he was employed laying pipes in Walterboro until he joined the United States Marine Corps in 1943 to serve in World War II, during which time more than twenty thousand African‑American men enlisted in the Corps. After completing arduous and segregated basic training at Montford Point Camp, the company deployed to the South Pacific from 1942 to 1949, where many of them served with distinction during some of the bloodiest struggles during the War in the Pacific. Some made the ultimate sacrifice in these battles while others continued to serve in Korea and Vietnam or at home in the ongoing fight for Civil Rights; and

Whereas, despite harsh contradictions between being denied civil rights at home and fighting for democracy overseas, the Montford Point Marines served with selfless patriotism. By putting their lives in danger, they helped to advance Civil Rights and swayed President Harry Truman’s decision to desegregate the Armed Forces in 1948, which paved the way for future generations of warriors, regardless of ethnicity, to serve in the finest military in the world; and

Whereas, having been discharged at the rank of corporal on February 7, 1946, Mr. Gibson married his beloved wife, the late Annie Barnes Gibson, on March 29, 1947, a union that lasted nearly seventy years until her death. Together they reared three fine children: Shirley A. Gibson, Marvin W. Gibson, and Cynthia Gibson Mobley. They blessed their parents with two granddaughters, Crystal M. Mobley and Camille L. Etheredge; and

Whereas, after his discharge, he farmed as a share cropper and he has been a master mason since 1947. He went to school under the GI Bill to learn trim and upholstery while upholstering furniture at McWhirter’s Upholstery and Service Station; and

Whereas, Mr. Gibson was self‑employed as an upholsterer after he finished school and until he began serving at Fort Jackson in the Civil Service, doing wood work and furniture repair. Later he served as supervisor of Field Maintenance and retired in July 1983 after thirty years of dedicated service; and

Whereas, in October 2018 in Atlanta, Georgia, sixty‑four years after he served at Montford Point, the United States Congress awarded the highest expression of national appreciation for service and contributions to the cause of freedom at home and around the world, the Congressional Gold Medal, to James Gibson, along with all the Montford Point Marines, for patriotism and distinguished achievement and for helping to pave the way for desegregation in today’s military; and

Whereas, a member of CC Johnson Consistory #136, he is a 33rd Degree Mason and is currently a member of Peerle Lodge #214 and a patron for Peerless Chapter #335 Order of the Eastern Star; and

Whereas, a faithful member of Rock Hill Baptist Church, where he has served as a Sunday school teacher and trustee and was chairman of the deacon board for twenty‑five years, James Gibson still loves reading the Bible, watching westerns, and tinkering with lawn mowers and tractors; and

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives is pleased to honor this son of South Carolina at the celebration of his ninety‑sixth birthday, and the members join with his family and friends in congratulating him on reaching this extraordinary milestone. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, congratulate James Gibson of Saluda County on the occasion of his ninety‑sixth birthday, and wish him a joyous birthday celebration and many years of continued health and happiness.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to James Gibson.

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