**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR K9 DEPUTY RICHARD HAZEL OF THE RICHLAND COUNTY SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENT FOR EXCEPTIONAL COURAGE IN THE FACE OF DANGER WHILE IN THE LINE OF DUTY AND TO CONGRATULATE HIM UPON RECEIVING THE SOUTH CAROLINA SHERIFFS’ ASSOCIATION 2019 MEDAL OF VALOR AWARD.

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives is pleased to learn that K9 Deputy Richard Hazel will be awarded the esteemed South Carolina Sheriffs’ Association 2019 Medal of Valor Award during the association’s Winter Conference Awards Banquet in Columbia on January 23, 2020; and

Whereas, the Medal of Valor Award is presented to a deputy sheriff who performs actions above and beyond the call of duty; exhibits exceptional courage, extraordinary decisiveness, and presence of mind; or acts with unusual swiftness, regardless of his or her personal safety, in an attempt to save or protect human life; and

Whereas, nominations made by a sheriff are presented to a standing committee of sheriffs who evaluate the nominations, and recipients are invited to the Winter Conference where they are presented with the medal at the Awards Banquet; and

Whereas, on April 3, 2019, K9 Deputy Richard Hazel was faced with a life‑threatening call for service when the Town of Lexington Police Department attempted to stop a stolen vehicle in the early morning hours. The driver refused to stop, and a chase ensued; and

Whereas, Richland County Sheriff’s Office was notified that the South Carolina Highway Patrol was in a chase with the same suspect in the stolen vehicle, and they were approaching Broad River Road in Richland County. After troopers requested assistance, patrol deputies and K9 Deputy Hazel came to assist; and

Whereas, the chase continued through Richland County and returned to Lexington County for about half an hour, ending, when the suspect driver lost control of his vehicle. Deputy Hazel, attempting to apprehend the subject, gave the suspect verbal commands, who then pointed a gun at Deputy Hazel, and the deputy fired his service weapon; and

Whereas, after the shooting, Deputy Hazel maintained a clear and professional demeanor and waited for additional deputies to respond to help with clearing the vehicle and securing the scene; and

Whereas, the suspect had a long criminal history, including burglaries, motor vehicle thefts, and drug charges, and in March 2019, possession of a stolen weapon and possession of a weapon by a convicted, violent felon; and

Whereas, the swift and courageous actions of K9 Specialist Hazel ended the incident without further harm to the community, though he was faced with the great potential of losing his own life; and

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives is honored to recognize the heroism and determination of law enforcement officers and first responders like K9 Deputy Richard Hazel who protect and defend our citizens, putting the safety of others above their own personal safety. 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 honor K9 Deputy Hazel of the Richland County Sheriff’s Department for exceptional courage in the face of danger while in the line of duty and congratulate him upon receiving the South Carolina Sheriffs’ Association 2019 Medal of Valor Award.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to K9 Deputy Richard Hazel.

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