**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO EXPRESS THE PROFOUND SORROW OF THE MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES UPON THE PASSING OF ROGER CLECKLEY OF ORANGEBURG COUNTY AND TO EXTEND THE DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO HIS FAMILY AND MANY FRIENDS.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Roger Cleckley of Orangeburg County on January 17, 2020, at the age of seventy‑two; and

Whereas, born and reared in Orangeburg, Roger Cleckley was the third of Solomon and Celia Mae Cleckley’s four children. He was educated at Denmark’s Voorhees College and received a certificate of leadership training from the University of South Carolina; and

Whereas, Roger was a man of faith. A fourth‑generation son of African Methodism, he was a lifelong member of Good Hope African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in Cope. He served as a member of the church school, steward board, and local lay organization and as a class leader. He served at many posts in the AME Church, including on the Seventh Episcopal District (South Carolina) Lay Organization (past president) and the Allen University Board of Trustees; and

Whereas, as a patriotic American, Roger served two years of active duty with the United States Army, including a one‑year tour of duty in Vietnam as a combat infantryman. He received many awards and medals for his service; and

Whereas, in 1971, Roger and his young bride, Bessie, returned to Orangeburg after spending a year in Washington, D.C. Roger immediately found employment with Tepeck Industries in St. Matthews. After his experiences with the Civil Rights Movement and military service, Roger thought things would be different. However, racial injustices were alive and well at Tepeck. Roger, having been reared to stand against injustices and having grown up in the AME Church of social action, knew he had no other recourse but to leave Tepeck. He could not find employment anywhere. However, his ordered steps led him to A.L. Williams Insurance Company, where he sold insurance for four years; and

Whereas, being an active member of the NAACP afforded Roger the opportunity to work with many different people concerning various political issues. He began to realize that God was calling him again to stand and make a difference in his community; and

Whereas, in 1984, after much discussion with family and many urgings from political friends, Roger decided to run for the office of Orangeburg County auditor. The road to victory was not easy. He was ridiculed, slandered, and humiliated, yet he stood. By that time, standing had become an intrinsic part of his being. On November 4, 1986, Roger was elected, making him the first African American elected to serve as auditor in the State of South Carolina since Reconstruction. He served in this position for thirty‑three years; and

Whereas, further, Roger served as chairman of the Forfeited Land Commission, secretary of the Orangeburg County Fiscal Education Commission, and chairperson of the Orangeburg County Democratic Nomination Committee. He was a member of the South Carolina Association of Auditors, Treasurers and Tax Collectors, as well as the South Carolina Association of Countywide Elected Officials. Roger was the longest‑serving local elected official in Orangeburg County; and

Whereas, Roger leaves to cherish his memory a loving and devoted wife of fifty years, Bessie Berry Cleckley; three adult sons, Roger “Al” Cleckley, Adrian Cleckley, and Kendrick Cleckley; five grandchildren, Justin, Kennedi, Janna, Kendra, and Jordan; two brothers, the Reverend Robert Cleckley and Dr. Watson Cleckley; a sister, Dr. Gwendolyn Snider; and a host of other family members and friends. He will be greatly missed. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, express their profound sorrow upon the passing of Roger Cleckley of Orangeburg County and extend the deepest sympathy to his family and many friends.

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