**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND COMMEND THE GRAY COLLEGIATE ACADEMY BOYS VARSITY BASKETBALL TEAM, COACHES, AND SCHOOL OFFICIALS FOR AN OUTSTANDING SEASON AND TO CONGRATULATE THEM FOR CAPTURING THE 2020 SOUTH CAROLINA CLASS AA STATE CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE.

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives is pleased to learn that the members of the Gray Collegiate basketball team of Lexington County won the state title at the state tournament at Colonial Life Arena in Columbia on March 6, 2020; and

Whereas, even though their roster was studded with names of new players and no player on this year’s roster scored a point in last year’s championship game, the Gray Collegiate War Eagles defeated Whale Branch High School 53‑39 to take their third straight state title and to finish the season with a 25‑6 record; and

Whereas, this year three of the team’s five starters were not on the War Eagle’s team last year: Tauris Watson, Latavian Lawrence, and RJ Howell. The other two starters, Tory Kelly and Chase McDuffie, did not add any points in last year’s championship game; and

Whereas, early in the game, Whale Branch took a 7‑1 lead, but Gray Collegiate used a 16‑4 run to finish the first quarter with a 17‑11 lead. In the third quarter, Chase McDuffie scored six straight points within ninety seconds, expanding the War Eagles’ lead to 35‑28; and

Whereas, Tauris Watson put 11 points on the scoreboard, Latavian Lawrence 9, Brandon Gardner 4, and Zaire Rogers 3, and RJ Howell and Tory Kelly posted two points each, while junior Chase McDuffie brought a career‑high 22 points to the game and posted six rebounds and four assists, responding to the team’s need after Tauris Watson racked up fouls early in the game; and

Whereas, in a sport that requires strength, agility, and accuracy, Head Coach Dion Bethea and his skilled coaching staff maximized their own athletic ability and training to forge a championship team and teach these athletes valuable lessons that will stand them in good stead throughout life; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, value the pride and respect that the Gray Collegiate basketball players have brought to their school and their community and expect to hear of their continued achievements in the days ahead. 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 commend the Gray Collegiate Academy boys varsity basketball team, coaches, and school officials for an outstanding season and congratulate them for capturing the 2020 South Carolina Class AA State Championship title.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Dr. Brian Newsome, Principal, and Coach Dion Bethea.

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