**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO HONOR AND CELEBRATE ORRIE ECKER WEST FOR AN EXEMPLARY CAREER AND UNPARALLELED COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC SERVICE AND TO WISH HER MUCH HAPPINESS AND SUCCESS IN ALL HER FUTURE ENDEAVORS.

Whereas, born in 1948 in Cottageville, South Carolina, to Ruby and Ernest L. West, Sr., Orrie Ecker West started life in a small town. Her family moved to Massachusetts, where she continued her education, earning a degree from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst in 1972 and her juris doctor from Northeastern University School of Law in Boston in 1977, becoming a member of the Massachusetts bar; and

Whereas, while living in Massachusetts, she worked in the Office of the Mayor of Boston for two years, shaping the Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) program. It was here that her lifelong dedication to serving the public was firmly established; and

Whereas, in 1980, Ms. West returned to South Carolina and was admitted to the bar in May of that year. She immediately began work as a staff attorney for the Neighborhood Legal Assistance Program; and

Whereas, she opened her own practice in Conway in 1984, accepting court appointments on criminal cases and becoming certified to represent clients in capital cases. The next year she was appointed to the Board of Directors of the Defender Corporation of Horry County where she served until 1992; and

Whereas, it was at this point that she was asked to take on the responsibility of Chief Public Defender for Horry County. She is the first and only African American Chief Public Defender in the Palmetto State; and

Whereas, during her tenure in this role, Ms. West has supervised the reorganization and expansion of the office, represented innumerable clients, and installed and upgraded the case management system database. Her initial staff of six has expanded to twenty‑seven through her endeavors to secure funding and resources. She took the office from an eleemosynary institution to a county agency, spearheading the office’s merger with the Georgetown County Public Defender’s Office. Her attorneys now represent over three thousand one hundred clients in two counties, managing a budget of over one million dollars; and

Whereas, known for doing more with less, Ms. West is a superlative administrator in addition to being a preeminent attorney. She has represented thousands of clients in every area of criminal law from magistrate’s court to capital litigation. Ms. West fights zealously for the life of her clients in capital cases, resulting in numerous life sentences after trials. Out of the dozens of capital cases that have gone to trial, only one client has been executed and that was at his own request; and

Whereas, Ms. West considers her crowning achievement to be the implementation of the Defenderdata system. This software program has increased office efficiency ten‑fold. After installing the program, Ms. West began to tinker with the software to better accommodate the needs of her attorneys. The Defenderdata Corporation now includes her changes in the software it sells nationwide; and

Whereas, in addition to her legal work, Ms. West sits on the governing board of Horry‑Georgetown Technical College. During her time on the board, the college has developed nationally recognized programs in culinary arts and golf course maintenance; and

Whereas, the members of the House of Representatives are grateful for the tireless efforts Orrie Ecker West has expended on behalf of the rights of the indigent and in the causes of the underprivileged and wish her much joy in the future. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, honor and celebrate Orrie Ecker West for an exemplary career and unparalleled commitment to public service and wish her much happiness and success in all her future endeavors.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Orrie Ecker West.

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