**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO CONGRATULATE IDEAL FUNERAL PARLOR UPON THE OCCASION OF ITS EIGHTIETH ANNIVERSARY AND TO COMMEND THE BUSINESS FOR ITS MANY YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE PEE DEE REGION.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina Senate are pleased to recognize Ideal Funeral Parlor as it celebrates this important milestone; and

Whereas, on August 17, 2019, Ideal Funeral Parlor held an anniversary celebration in Florence to mark this momentous occasion. The event included recognition, music, entertainment, food and refreshments, and fun; and

Whereas, Ideal Funeral Parlor was established in 1939 by a group of African‑American businessmen with incredible vision and foresight. The original partners were Reverend W. S. Guiles, Reverend Arthur James, Reverend and Mrs. Willie A. Johnson, Mr. Flander Singleton, and Mr. Jasper Singleton; and

Whereas, the funeral parlor’s first building was located at 300 Mullins Street in Florence. At that time, principals were paid five dollars per funeral for the use of their cars. In 1968, the parlor’s physical location moved to 1005 E. Cheves Street, and in 2002, it moved to its present facility at 106 East Darlington Street; and

Whereas, the funeral parlor’s first manager, Reverend W. A. Johnson, served until his death in 1961, and since that time, the business has continued to grow and prosper under other managers, including Rufus Hawkins and R. Douglas Hawkins; and

Whereas, with a legacy of strong leadership, Ideal Funeral Parlor incorporated in 1986, with Reverend Wescott Johnson as president. Upon his death, Mrs. Evelyn Guile served as president of the board, and in 2018, Mr. William Johnson was elected chairman of the board. Current board members include Johnny Holmes, Leo James, and Taft Guile; and

Whereas, recently, the funeral parlor introduced a Historic African‑American Obituary Database, which is a searchable database of obituary programs from 1960 to 2019 that will serve as a valuable resource for African‑American families in the Pee Dee looking to research their family trees; and

Whereas, today, many of the families of the business’s original founders are still involved with the funeral parlor, and they continue the legacy of excellence in service, professionalism, courtesy, and respect established by the founders; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina Senate greatly appreciate the rich history and heritage of Ideal Funeral Parlor and commend its dedicated service to its surrounding community and the State of South Carolina. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, congratulate Ideal Funeral Parlor upon the occasion of its eightieth anniversary and commend the business for its many years of service to the Pee Dee region.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Ideal Funeral Parlor.

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