**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO CONGRATULATE DR. HENRY PONDER ON THE GRAND OCCASION OF HIS NINETY‑FOURTH BIRTHDAY AND TO CELEBRATE THIS MOMENTOUS MILESTONE.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina Senate are delighted to learn that Dr. Henry Ponder recently celebrated his ninety‑fourth birthday; and

Whereas, on March 28, 1928 in Wewoka, Oklahoma, Dr. Ponder was born the eleventh of fourteen children to Frank and Lillie Mae Ponder. Inspired by a speech by Mary McCleod Bethune, he was driven early in life towards accomplishing the dream of leading and becoming a university president. To follow that dream he worked with great fervor in school, excelling academically and serving with great diligence on the high school student council as class president. He eventually graduated from Douglas High School in 1946 before attending Langston University. As a collegiate student he pledged to the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity and, in 1951, earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture; and

Whereas, an upstanding citizen eager to answer his nation’s call, Dr. Ponder served two years in the United States Army during the Korean War. Following his military service, he returned to his path in academia, working as a research assistant while earning his master’s degree from Oklahoma State University. Finally, building upon all of the knowledge and experience he amassed throughout his life, he received his doctorate from Ohio State University; and

Whereas, over the course of his career, Dr. Ponder served with great acumen in a variety of positions including as both chair and assistant professor for the Department of Agriculture and Business at Virginia State College, in Petersburg, Virginia; as chairman of the Department of Business and Economics of Fort Valley State College in Fort Valley, Georgia; and as vice president of Alabama A&M University in Normal, Alabama. It was in 1973, however, that his dream of becoming a university president was ultimately fulfilled when he became the president of Benedict College. Here, he dutifully served the students in Columbia by leading the college for more than a decade. Following his eleventh year of service, he was called to serve as president of Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. During his twelve year tenure at Fisk University, Dr. Ponder was honored for his excellent service as one of the “100 Most Effective College Presidents in the United States;” and

Whereas, in 1996, after his exceptional service at Fisk University, Dr. Ponder accepted a new challenge, serving as the CEO and president of the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education for nearly six years. In early 2002, he became president of Talladega College in Alabama. During his tenure at Talladega College, his vision and leadership were vital to the one hundred and sixty year old institution retaining its accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; and

Whereas, throughout his extensive and storied career, Dr. Ponder received considerable support from his beloved wife, Eunice, who spent more than half a century at his side, and the two daughters they raised with much love and care; and

Whereas, birthdays provide a special time and opportunity to celebrate and honor those of great importance in our lives. It is a great pleasure for the members of the South Carolina Senate to join Dr. Henry Ponder’s family and friends to recognize this joyous occasion and wish him much happiness and relaxation as he celebrates another year in the Palmetto State. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, congratulate Dr. Henry Ponder on the grand occasion of his ninety‑fourth birthday and celebrate this momentous milestone.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Dr. Henry Ponder.

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