**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR RUSSELL E. HART, CHAIRMAN OF THE WIL LOU GRAY OPPORTUNITY SCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS, ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT AFTER TWENTY‑SEVEN YEARS OF EXEMPLARY SERVICE, AND TO WISH HIM MUCH HAPPINESS AS HE BEGINS HIS WELL‑DESERVED RETIREMENT.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives are pleased to learn that Russell “Russ” E. Hart, chairman of the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School Board of Directors, soon will begin a well‑deserved retirement after devoting nearly three decades of his incredibly valuable time and expertise for the betterment of others; and

Whereas, born on August 11, 1930, in Union County, the young Russ loved playing sports, especially baseball, football, and basketball. He was a member of a 1947 championship winning basketball team, which also earned All-State Team of the Year honors; and

Whereas, after graduating from Kelly Pinkney, he attended Union High School for his senior year to play football. He earned a full athletic scholarship to Newberry College, but after a sports injury left him sidelined, he departed school in order to join the United States Air Force for four years. While stationed at Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida, he joined the baseball team, pitching against other local Air Force Bases; and

Whereas, after completing his military service, Russ Hart returned to college, utilizing the GI Bill to finance his education. He graduated from the University of South Carolina in 1955, and began his first job for the City of Conway, developing a Parks and Recreation Program for Conway and then in Marion; and

Whereas, in 1970, he was offered the position of Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of Spartanburg. Upon consolidating with the county in 1976, he was given the position of director for the County of Spartanburg, where he worked until retiring in 1992; and

Whereas, joining the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School Board of Trustees in the 1990s, he has served with dedication for twenty-six years, presiding as chairman for twenty-one years. The oldest alternative education provider in the State, Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School has helped meet the educational needs of at-risk youth, producing thousands of successful young people from all walks of life across the Palmetto State; and

Whereas, among other accolades, Russ Hart was voted president of the Parks and Recreation Association in 1972‑1973, and Professional of the Year by the Parks and Recreation Association in 1988. He also was inducted into South Carolina’s Amateur Softball Association Hall of Fame in 1998, Aynor High School’s Athletic Hall of Fame in 2007, and Union High School’s Hall of Fame in 2008; and

Whereas, Russ Hart was married to his high school sweetheart, Francis, for thirty-eight years before losing her to cancer, and has been married to Marjorie for thirty‑one years. He has two sons, and Marjorie has two daughters. Together, they have eight grandchildren and thirteen great‑grandchildren. A man of faith, he has taught Sunday School for both youth and adults at various churches for fifty‑five years; and

Whereas, the House of Representatives recognizes the success of the State of South Carolina, the strength of its communities, and the vitality of American society as a whole depend, in great measure, upon the dedication of individuals like Russell E. Hart, who use their talents and time to serve and inspire others. 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 honor Russell E. Hart, chairman of the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School Board of Directors, on the occasion of his retirement after twenty‑seven years of exemplary service, and to wish him much happiness as he begins his well‑deserved retirement.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Russell E. Hart.

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