**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO HONOR THE LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF PROMINENT AFRICAN AMERICAN ACTRESS VIOLA DAVIS, A NATIVE OF ST. MATTHEWS.

Whereas, Viola Davis was born on August 11, 1965, on her grandparents’ farm, then known as the Singleton Plantation. Davis describes her grandparents’ home as “a one‑room shack” and recalls hearing stories of the home on the day of her birth, noting it was filled with family, laughter, and celebration; and

Whereas, at two months old, her family relocated to Central Falls, Rhode Island, where her father, Dan Davis, worked as a horse groomer and trainer. Her mother, Mary Alice (Logan), worked hard as a maid, factory worker, and civil rights campaigner. Undoubtedly, her upbringing was difficult from an early age and there were times that she depended on school lunches to feed her and get her through the day; and

Whereas, she fostered a love for acting beginning at the tender age of six after seeing Cicely Tyson perform in a television adaptation of “The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman.” After graduating from Central Falls High School, Davis studied theater at Rhode Island College and later auditioned for a drama course at the prestigious Juilliard School in New York City, where at the age of twenty‑six, she won a funded position; and

Whereas, in her silver screen debut, Davis played a small role as a nurse in the 1996 film, “The Substance of Fire.” As her career continued, she earned guest roles on various television shows and films before finally winning the role of Nurse Lynnette Peeler in the 2000 series, “City of Angels.” Since that time, she’s acted in over seventy‑five different roles, including award winning performances in “Doubt,” “Won’t Back Down,” “The Help,” “How to Get Away with Murder,” and “Fences.” She also won a Tony in 2001 for Best Featured Actress in a play for her work on “King Hedley II;” and

Whereas, despite her moving and powerful performances, it took three decades for Davis to land her first lead role in a major studio movie, “Widows.” With her undeniable talents and strong voice, Davis joins a host of other powerful African American women in seeking out roles written to show regular African American women, and to fill in a missing segment of the film industry; and

Whereas, in addition to being a Tony, Emmy, and Golden Globe winning actress, Davis’ work extends beyond scripted stage and film projects. She started her own production company, JuVee, with her husband of fifteen years, fellow actor, Julius Tennon. Together they’ve released two documentary series, “Two Sides” and “The Last Defense,” which focus on racial discrimination within the criminal justice system. In 2018, Davis explored her lifelong love of reading and authored the sequel to the beloved 1968 children’s book, “Corduroy;” and

Whereas, powerfully and purposefully, Viola Davis has worked to become a voice of inspiration for all those who look to her for guidance. A mother and an influential figure, she takes it upon herself to give honest, yet inspiring words, to those who might listen, encouraging others to follow their ambition regardless of difficulty or imagined “glass ceiling;” and

Whereas, though her time living in South Carolina as a child was brief, on her fifty‑fifth birthday, Davis re‑established a contemporary connection with St. Matthews, South Carolina when she purchased her grandmother’s home, her birthplace, and the one hundred sixty‑acre farm where it sits. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, honor the life and achievements of prominent African American actress Viola Davis, a native of St. Matthews.

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