**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR DR. JERMAN DISASA, FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR OF CHAMPS, AND TO COMMEND HIS GODLY IMPACT ON THE LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN HIS COMMUNITY AND THE PALMETTO STATE.

Whereas, South Carolina House of Representatives is pleased to learn that the CHAMPS Program, which stands for Communities Helping Assisting Motivating Promising Students, has celebrated more than a quarter of a century instilling a love of learning in the state’s youth; and

Whereas, born in 1947 in Gidami, Ethiopia, Jerman lost his father at the early age of three, and for her protection and security, his mother had to remarry; and

Whereas, he was allowed to choose living with his mother in a new village or staying with his older brother to remain on land where his family had lived for generations. He chose to stay on that land; and

Whereas, in the third grade, Jerman was given the opportunity to continue his education at a residential school supported by the Presbyterian Church, so he walked several miles with two others his age to Bethel Evangelical Secondary School where he became part of the first graduating class at Bethel Evangelical; and

Whereas, after his high school graduation, Mr. Disasa traveled to the United States to attend Sterling College in Kansas, where he earned a bachelor’s degree with support of Presbyterian women; and

Whereas, when he returned to Ethiopia, he began teaching at Bethel Evangelical, which allowed him to give back the immeasurable gift of education Bethel had given him. At Bethel, he received another inestimable gift, for it was there he met and married his beloved wife, Nigatwa, and they have been married for forty‑three years; and

Whereas, Mr. Disasa served with Ethiopian Airlines and continued teaching at Bethel during the Marxist revolution. He was imprisoned multiples times because of his Western education; and

Whereas, after the birth of their first son, Amos, in 1979, they escaped from Ethiopia and came to the United States, and he began studying for a doctorate in international education in Columbia; and

Whereas, Mr. Disasa taught at the University of South Carolina in the Byrnes International Center and completed his degree in three years. By 1992, the Disasas had added three more fine sons to their family: Raaji, Siega, and Philipos; and

Whereas, in 1994, the family moved to Laurens County where Dr. Disasa began serving as director of special projects at Presbyterian College and where he began the CHAMPS Program in 1995; and

Whereas, the CHAMPS Program offers thirty students from Laurens County schools a once‑in‑a‑lifetime experience every summer, where they have the opportunity to grow educationally, emotionally, socially, and spiritually; and

Whereas, CHAMPS has thrived with students taking classes during the day to advance their studies and having social experiences in evenings, activities that remind them they are children of God, fearfully and wonderfully made just the way they are; and

Whereas, in 2002, Eastminster Presbyterian Church in Columbia began a CHAMPS program in Richland County schools, and with thirty students at Presbyterian College and thirty at Eastminster every summer, over eight hundred children have been blessed with the opportunity to become CHAMPS students; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives are grateful that Jerman Disasa has instilled a love and value for education in the lives of so many young people in our State and are thankful for his heart to serve, his compassion, his patience, his gratitude for every breath every day, and above all, his unwavering trust in our Heavenly Father. 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 Dr. Jerman Disasa, founder and director of CHAMPS, and commend his godly impact on the lives of young people in his community and the Palmetto State.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Dr. Jerman Disasa.

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