**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO EXPRESS PROFOUND SORROW UPON THE PASSING OF KURT ZIMMERLI, TO CELEBRATE HIS LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS, AND TO EXTEND THE DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO HIS FAMILY AND MANY FRIENDS.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Kurt Zimmerli of Spartanburg on Sunday, May 30, 2021, at the venerable age of ninety‑three; and

Whereas, a native of Switzerland, Kurt Zimmerli was born on May 16, 1928, to the late Jakob and Frieda Zimmerli‑Widmer. In 1954, he earned a degree in mechanical engineering from State Technical College in Burgdorf, Switzerland, and married Nelly Bugler that same year. During his college years, he completed his military service with the rank of first lieutenant. In 1956, the couple moved to the United States; and

Whereas, although he was unable to speak English upon arrival, his talents as a technical innovator were evident, and he quickly mastered the language, working in New York, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania for respected firms. He earned an MBA from Western New England College in 1962, and served as Honorary Consul of Switzerland for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania from 1965 to 1970; and

Whereas, a successful businessman, Mr. Zimmerli came to Spartanburg in 1969, and founded Zima Corporation, which became the largest textile and carpet wet‑processing sales firm in the United States. He then co‑founded Küsters Corporation in 1974, of which he became chairman in 1994, and chairman emeritus in 2000; and

Whereas, it was Kurt Zimmerli’s philanthropic work that endeared him to the Spartanburg community. With a love of nature, he brought numerous parks and spots of natural beauty to the Spartanburg area, which gave the city a cosmopolitan feel, including the interactive fountain at the entrance to Barnet Park and the Zimmerli Amphitheatre in that park. He also donated the landscaping for the headquarters of the Spartanburg County Public Libraries and the fountain honoring Hans Balmer at the downtown campus of Spartanburg Community College; and

Whereas, an avid supporter of the arts community, Kurt Zimmerli served on the board of trustees of Converse College from 1983 to 2003, and he was named a life trustee. In 2002, Converse College awarded him the Dexter Edgar Converse Award, the college’s highest honor. He and his wife were staunch supporters of the Spartanburg Philharmonic and the Petrie School of Music at Converse. At the Brevard Music Center, the Zimmerlis received the Distinguished Service Award in 2012, for leadership giving for capital projects such as Helvetia, the guest artist residence; the annual Zimmerli Piano Competition; and the Zimmerli Family Opera Endowment, and he was named trustee emeritus in 2003; and

Whereas, Mr. Zimmerli’s commitment to Spartanburg is reflected in the numerous organizations he served, including as board member for the Spartanburg Arts Council from 1974 to 1988, and the Spartanburg County Foundation from 1989 to 1995, also serving as its chairman in 1994. Among other accolades, he was awarded the Order of the Palmetto in 1975, the State’s highest civilian honor for extraordinary lifetime service, and the Neville Holcombe Distinguished Citizenship Award from the Chamber of Commerce in 2004. He and Nelly together received the 2007 David W. Reid Award for excellence in the arts; and

Whereas, he leaves to cherish his memory his wife of sixty‑six years, Nelly; a daughter, Kathy Zimmerli Wofford; a son, Mark Jakob Zimmerli (Lea Anne); and grandchildren, Allison and Lauren Russell. He will be dearly missed by his community and all who had the privilege and pleasure of knowing him. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, express profound sorrow upon the passing of Kurt Zimmerli, celebrate his life and achievements, and extend the deepest sympathy to his family and many friends.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Kurt Zimmerli.

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