**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO EXPRESS PROFOUND SORROW UPON THE PASSING OF JAMES “JIMMY” OLANDA RUFF, 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 James “Jimmy” Olanda Ruff on Saturday, October 9, 2021, at the venerable age of seventy‑four; and

Whereas, the eldest child of the late James Ruff, Sr., and Norma Bates Ruff, Jimmy was born in Columbia on October 15, 1946. Educated in the public schools of Richland County, he graduated from Booker T. Washington High School as a member of the Class of 1964. He went on to attend Tennessee State University in Nashville, until he was drafted into the United States Army to serve in the Vietnam War. Upon completion of his military service, he returned home to Columbia and enrolled at Benedict College, where he received his bachelor’s degree in Political Science in 1971; and

Whereas, a dedicated and diligent individual, Jimmy was well‑suited for his career as both a public and private sector employee. Though he worked everywhere from IBM, to the Columbia Urban League, to state government, some of his most notable positions included his service as an analyst for the State Budget and Control Board, as the human resource director for South Carolina State University and Central Carolina Technical College, and later as the director of the S.C. Department of Veterans Affairs after his appointment by Governor James Hodges. In characteristic fashion, he was also an excellent former board member of the Dorn Research Institute, where he had the opportunity to continue his focus in providing aid to the Veterans Administration through research and education; and

Whereas, a lover of jazz and blessed with a talent for music, Jimmy earned a reputation as an accomplished trumpet player. Beginning as a member of the band at Booker T. Washington High School, he honed his craft through diligent hard work and practice, until he was awarded several prestigious scholarships that led him to become a member of the world‑renowned Aristocrat of Bands at Tennessee State University. His vast knowledge and trusted musical acumen worked to aid him when he was asked to sit in on musical recordings and when he served on several committees which promoted his community’s performing arts; and

Whereas, known by those who loved him as a strong but gentle person, Jimmy’s presence conveyed his kind and caring nature, as well as his “can do” attitude. He was an avid reader, a lover of all things to do with the water, and took great pleasure in spending time with his family. As a man of faith, he was baptized at an early age at Sidney Park CME Church and later attended First Nazareth Baptist Church regularly; and

Whereas, Jimmy leaves to cherish his memory his beloved wife of fifty‑five years, Gardenia Brailey Ruff; his daughters, Stacy Parker and Dari Kristen Ruff; his son, Deron James Ruff; his sister, Reverend Faye Ruff Houston; his granddaughters, Megan Kennedy Parker, Brailey Lauren Parker, and Kayla Andrea Parker; his grandson, Theodore Parker IV; as well as a host of other family and friends. He will be greatly missed by all who had the 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 James “Jimmy” Olanda Ruff, 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 Gardenia Brailey Ruff.

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