**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR ACCLAIMED MASTER NATURALIST, CRAFTSMAN, AND EDUCATOR TOM MANCKE OF RICHLAND COUNTY AND TO EXPRESS THE APPRECIATION OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FOR HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO PRESERVING THE NATURAL HISTORY, RICH OUTDOOR HERITAGE, AND CENTURIES‑OLD CRAFTS TRADITION OF THIS GREAT STATE.

Whereas, Hopkins resident Tom Mancke has introduced multitudes of children to the joys of the outdoors and all the good things that can be done there; and

Whereas, behind the elementary building of Hammond School in Columbia is a rustic woods‑backed, porch‑fronted log cabin, a complete contrast to the otherwise modern college‑preparatory day school with which it shares the campus. Inside the cabin is a Hammond exclusive ‑‑ certainly in the Columbia area, probably in the entire State of South Carolina ‑‑ a source of educational fun that may, in fact, be unique in the United States: Tom Mancke, Hammond’s naturalist‑in‑residence. So popular with the students is he that one teacher says of him, “The kids follow him like the Pied Piper. Using our nature trails and cabin, animal skeletons, snake skins, and plants and critters of all sorts, he makes science come alive. The kids adore him!”; and

Whereas, Tom, with nearly thirty‑three years’ experience teaching daily at the school as its permanent naturalist, starts the children off with nature walks near the Lower School, followed by excursions in his mini yellow school bus to Hammond’s nearby wetland property and, for older students, off‑campus wilderness adventures to state parks and other natural areas and jaunts to far‑flung foreign parts for more exotic natural experiences. In addition, each year he coordinates the school’s Early Tech Week, which celebrates vintage tools, crafts, and wilderness skills and gives fifth grade students hands‑on opportunities to create and take home their own primitive handicrafts; and

Whereas, Tom avers that natural history is all about relationships and interconnections. As he explains, “The teachers get excited about what we do because the students come back with stories to tell. The great thing is this: People come in, they see this cabin, and it looks kind of neat, but we’re not here. We’re out there. This cabin is a base camp for me; I can keep my stuff here. We do have programs here occasionally, but the big thing is just getting kids outside. What I love about it is you never know what you’re going to encounter”; and

Whereas, at Hammond’s 2020 graduation ceremony, Tom delivered the commencement speech to the graduating class of that year. But Tom, who is beloved for his personal charm and kindness, as well as his knowledge of the natural world, also shares his expertise with various adult groups beyond the halls of Hammond. In June 2022, for instance, he is scheduled to serve as a special guest speaker at the Environmental Education Association of South Carolina’s 2022 Conference, with the theme Educating Outside the Box. In addition, he has been featured in such publications as *South Carolina Wildlife* magazine and *The State* newspaper and is called on by them to confer in matters of plant or “critter” identification; and

Whereas, South Carolina is blessed to claim this multi‑gifted educator as a native son, and the House is pleased to honor him publicly for a career that has enriched the lives of so many. 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 acclaimed master naturalist, craftsman, and educator Tom Mancke of Richland County and express the appreciation of the South Carolina House of Representatives for his contributions to preserving the natural history, rich outdoor heritage, and centuries‑old crafts tradition of this great State.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Tom Mancke.

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