**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO HONOR THE LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE FORMER MAYOR OF CHESTER, PROMINENT AFRICAN AMERICAN, CHRISTOPHER KING, SR., A NATIVE SON OF CHESTER.

Whereas, born on February 4, 1936, in Chester, the Honorable Christopher “Chris” King, Sr., was the son of the late William Robert King, Sr., and the late Ellen Louise Nelson King. Raised in a devout Christian household, he became a member of the Calvary Baptist Church at a young age. There he served for many years as a deacon, and truly learned to live with the religious principle of, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”; and

Whereas, throughout his life, Mr. King viewed education in the highest regard. He graduated from Finley High School in 1954, then went on to attend Atlanta College of Mortuary Science in Atlanta, Georgia. He graduated from the program in 1958. He received his bachelor’s degree from Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1959. Believing that education would foster economic and political equality, he was known to counsel every young person to continue pursuing higher education; and

Whereas, a prolific businessman with much determination and skill, Mr. King managed multiple business ventures with great success by ensuring service to clientele was always the cornerstone of his business model. Leading King’s Funeral Home for more than forty years, he created a prosperous business that always sought to best serve citizens who were in need across multiple counties in the Palmetto State. Similarly, he also managed rental properties that provided low‑income housing for the citizens of Chester. He chose to treat clients with dignity and genuine love, and his relatability often provided positive experiences for all involved; and

Whereas, amongst his other hobbies of bicycle riding and skating, a young Chris became actively interested in politics. At age fourteen, using his newly obtained driver’s license, he began shuttling voters to the polls. At age twenty‑three, he made his first unsuccessful bid for public office, seeking a seat on the Chester County School Board. He then made an unsuccessful run for the South Carolina Senate; and

Whereas, these consecutive defeats did little to deter Mr. King from the political arena, as his desire to run for office was a pursuit to become a true public servant for the citizens of Chester. When he did find success, he did so in historic fashion, becoming the first African American mayor of Chester. This victory, however, brought with it another fight, as he was forced to contend with the legal system over his right to assume his elected position. That decision culminated in a historic decision by the United States Supreme Court which established single member districts for Chester County; and

Whereas, a true civic servant, Mr. King was a founder of the Congressional Black Caucus, a precinct manager of Chester Ward IV, and was a delegate to the South Carolina Democratic Party state conventions. He also was an active member and participant of the Friendship Junior College Board, Selective Service Board, Carolina Community Action Board, Small Business Administration Board, chairman of the Chester Sewer District Board, the South Carolina Mortician Association, Masonic Lodge #32, Hill City Elk, Christian Burial Aid Society, the African Protective and Burial Society, and was a chartered member of the Chester Optimist Club; and

Whereas, dedicated in his pursuit to serve the citizens of Chester, he was best supported by his own loving family. He and his wife, Margie Buckson King had eight children, Christopher C. King II, the Honorable William Robert King, Dr. Nelson Maurice King, the Honorable Robbie King‑Boyd, Pansy King‑Reid, Margie King‑Delk, Marty Elazer “Capp” King, and the Honorable John Richard Christopher King; and

Whereas, the Honorable Christopher King, Sr., was a man who stepped forward to lead and serve in a time when this State most needed men of integrity and diligence. A true public servant with a sincere wish to lift up others and provide what service he could, his efforts and legacy should serve as a shining beacon to all who aspire to public service in the future. 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 the former mayor of Chester, prominent African American, Christopher King, Sr., a native son of Chester.

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