**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR GARY NELSON OF SUMTER HIGH SCHOOL FOR HIS OUTSTANDING CAREER AS AN ATHLETIC TRAINER, TO CONGRATULATE HIM ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT, AND TO WISH HIM MUCH SUCCESS IN ALL HIS FUTURE ENDEAVORS.

Whereas, it is with great pleasure that the South Carolina House of Representatives celebrates those individuals who give tirelessly of themselves to nurture the young people of this great State. Prominent in the roll call of such benefactors to our youth is Sumter High School’s retiring athletic trainer, Gary Nelson, who for thirty‑eight years has tended to the needs of injured student athletes with a sure hand; and

Whereas, for nearly four decades, there has been one constant force in Sumter High athletics. Coaches and administrators have come and gone through the years, but one man has been there through it all: Gary Nelson; and

Whereas, Gary first set foot on Sumter High School’s campus in 1984, becoming the first athletic trainer in school history. For twenty‑six years, he was the only athletic trainer, though he had some student trainers helping him along the way; and

Whereas, he earned his bachelor’s degree at East Tennessee State, did his graduate work at Furman, and spent years working with college and professional athletes before taking up his duties at Sumter High. Working with high schoolers, he found, was a new ball game, one he grew to love; and

Whereas, through the years, he has been recognized as one of the top athletic trainers in the nation. Gary is in the South Carolina Coaches Association Hall of Fame, as well as the Sumter County Athletic Hall of Fame. He won the Fred Hoover Award in 2013, earning South Carolina Athletic Trainers Association Hall of Fame status. He won the Athletic Trainers Service Award in 2001 from the National Athletic Trainers Association and has received countless other honors throughout his career; and

Whereas, after thirty‑eight years of doing everything he could to heal the injured athletes of Sumter High, Nelson is putting away the scissors and tape. He leaves behind a legacy that will not be forgotten in Sumter High Gamecock athletics. In fact, every athlete that enters the training room he built will know his name because of a new honor announced on June 3: Outgoing athletic director Curtis Johnson revealed that the training room at the high school will be named after Gary Nelson. The legendary trainer was presented with the plaque that will hang on the wall at a surprise celebration of his career on that same day, at which time he also was presented with a proclamation from Mayor David Merchant that officially marked June 3 as Gary Nelson Day; and

Whereas, Gary Nelson has always found his strongest support in his lovely wife, Karen, and their two children. He is not yet sure what his future will hold; however, he and Karen are looking forward to spending more time with their family, including their son and daughter and the grandtwins due to be born in September; and

Whereas, grateful for Gary Nelson’s legacy of consistent commitment and excellence, the House is pleased to wish this dedicated athletic trainer well as he enters retirement, and the members extend best wishes for much satisfaction in the more leisurely pace of the days ahead. 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 Gary Nelson of Sumter High School for his outstanding career as an athletic trainer, congratulate him on the occasion of his retirement, and wish him much success in all his future endeavors.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Gary Nelson.

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