**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO EXPRESS THE PROFOUND SORROW OF THE MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES UPON THE PASSING OF VIOLA D. KENNEDY OF WINNSBORO, TO CELEBRATE HER LIFE, AND TO EXTEND THE DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO HER FAMILY AND MANY FRIENDS.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives were deeply saddened by the passing of Viola D. Kennedy of Winnsboro on January 8, 2022, at the venerable age of ninety‑three; and

Whereas, born to Cleve and Annie Byrd Davis, Viola Davis Kennedy came into this world on December 2, 1928, in Blair. Her mother died when Viola was only 12 months old, and her father married Ruby Williams, whom Viola knew as her mother; and

Whereas, the young Viola was baptized at age 10 at Purity Baptist Church. She graduated from Camden’s Boylen Haven Mather Academy High School, a private boarding school for African American students. She next attended Benedict College and accepted a position as secretary and part‑time typing instructor at Camp Liberty High School. There, she met James Kennedy, Jr., and they were married in Winnsboro, where she made her home for over seventy years; and

Whereas, in 1955, she began working at Gordon Elementary School as food service manager and part‑time secretary, positions she held for fifteen years. When Fairfield Junior High opened in 1970, she became its food service manager. After seventeen years there, she returned to Benedict College and received her teacher’s certificate. She then moved to Fairfield Career and Technology Center, where she started the school’s first food service program as its first culinary arts instructor. She won the school district’s 1987‑1988 outstanding first‑year teacher award; and

Whereas, in 1991, Viola retired after forty years of service. After retirement, she regularly served as a substitute teacher at Fairfield County’s middle and high schools and career center, where she was in high demand by school administrators; and

Whereas, food prepared in the Southern tradition was one of her fortes, and she was widely known throughout the county for this gift, which she used in service to others in her Christian work. She was a member of St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church, which she started attending when she moved to Winnsboro in 1950. During more than sixty years as a member of St. Paul, she served on key committees and ministries that worked to implement the Christian philosophy of helping one’s fellow man. St. Paul recognized her in 1983 as Mother of the Year and again in 2002 with a certificate of appreciation for service. The church considered her one of its “mothers” for her inspirational example to many of the younger adults; and

Whereas, her services to the community extended beyond the church. She was a member of the local American Red Cross, where she worked with it and other agencies to provide relief and assistance to people impacted by natural disasters. She was also a member of the local chapter of the National Association of Negro Women and a Mother of the Year nominee for the State of South Carolina; and

Whereas, preceded in death by her husband, James Kennedy, Jr., and one son, Stanley Winslow Kennedy, Viola Kennedy leaves to cherish her memory three sons, Donald Robert (Pam) Kennedy, Ronald James (Diane) Kennedy, and Tony (Sybil) Kennedy; four daughters, Inga Dianne (Ricky) Blackwell, Awilda Pearl (Robert) Kight, Sonya Kennedy, and Leeshu Kennedy; twelve grandchildren; twenty great‑grandchildren; and a host of other relatives and friends. She will be greatly missed. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, express their profound sorrow upon the passing of Viola D. Kennedy of Winnsboro, celebrate her life, and extend the deepest sympathy to her family and many friends.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Donald R. Kennedy for the family.

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