**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO CELEBRATE THE JOYOUS OCCASION OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF BENEDICT COLLEGE AND TO CONGRATULATE AND COMMEND THE ADMINISTRATION, FACULTY, STAFF, AND STUDENTS FOR MORE THAN A CENTURY AND A HALF OF DEDICATED SERVICE TO PROVIDING SIGNIFICANT EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN SOUTH CAROLINA.

Whereas, the South Carolina Senate is pleased to learn that Benedict College, situated on more than one hundred ten acres in the historic Waverly neighborhood in the state’s capital, will celebrate its sesquicentennial anniversary on March 18, 2021; and

Whereas, founded in 1870 by Rhode Island native and abolitionist, Mrs. Bathsheba A. Benedict, with the assistance of the American Baptist Home Mission Society, Benedict Institute opened its doors with ten students, eventually welcoming thirty‑nine in its first year, with a plan to educate recently emancipated African Americans to become teachers and preachers with a curriculum specifically limited to reading, writing, spelling, and religion; and

Whereas, during its first twenty‑five years the school expanded the curriculum by offering traditional college disciplines and an industrial department that included carpentry, shoemaking, printing, and painting. By 1894, the institution was chartered as a liberal arts college by the South Carolina General Assembly and was renamed Benedict College; and

Whereas, historically, large crowds would join students on January 1 to celebrate Emancipation Day and again on March 19 for Founder’s Day celebrations honoring the legacy of Mrs. Benedict; and

Whereas, in 1911, Benedict College established a football team led by Ralph F. Bates, a professor who served as both player and coach during the team’s first two years. By 1920, the undefeated football team was a force with which to be reckoned, and for the next three seasons, no team scored against the purple and gold Deacons. Students voted in 1938 to change the mascot to the Tigers; and

Whereas, until 1930, the college was led by a succession of white, northern presidents sponsored by the American Baptist Home Mission Society. The college represented a new era of independence when its first African American president was inaugurated, Benedict alumnus and former president of nearby Morris College Joseph Jacob Starks. Dr. Starks introduced Bachelor of Science and Pre‑Medicine degrees to the college; and

Whereas, in 1937, students formed their own branch of the NAACP and participated in a national anti‑lynching march, and in 1939, state activists met on campus to form the South Carolina NAACP State Conference of Branches. After World War II, students and alumni provided leaders in the city’s Civil Rights Movement; and

Whereas, since the Civil Rights Movement, Benedict alumni have held significant leadership positions in local, state, and national, and international government, business, media, sports, and fine arts; and

Whereas, twenty years into the new millennium, more than eighteen thousands graduates of this private, historically Black liberal arts college have contributed to the rich fabric of their nation and the American way of life, and Benedict is on the cusp of unprecedented growth with expansions to enrollment, facilities, research, service, and community outreach; and

Whereas, for more than one hundred fifty years, Benedict College has contributed countless benefits to the Palmetto State, and the members of the South Carolina Senate are pleased to honor the college on this Founder’s Day and on the occasion of such a momentous anniversary. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate celebrate the joyous occasion of the one hundred fiftieth anniversary of Benedict College and congratulate and commend the administration, faculty, staff, and students for more than a century and a half of dedicated service to providing significant educational opportunities in South Carolina.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to college president, Dr. Roslyn Clark Artis.

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