**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR MARK BERSON, HEAD COACH OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA MEN’S SOCCER TEAM, UPON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT AFTER FORTY‑THREE YEARS OF OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE UNIVERSITY AND TO HIS PLAYERS, AND TO WISH HIM CONTINUED SUCCESS AND HAPPINESS IN ALL HIS FUTURE ENDEAVORS.

Whereas, it is altogether fitting and proper that the members of the South Carolina Senate should pause in their deliberations to express deep gratitude to Coach Mark Berson for his significant contributions to men’s soccer at the University of South Carolina (UofSC) as he retires at the end of the 2021 season; and

Whereas, Coach Berson retires as the only coach ever of UofSC men’s soccer and as the winningest active coach in the country; and

Whereas, the Gamecocks had only club soccer before Coach Berson arrived in March 1978, so it was the school’s newest varsity team, and he was still two weeks away from his twenty‑fifth birthday; and

Whereas, when he took the helm of the soccer program, the nascent team had no field, no uniforms, no balls, no schedule, and no players, yet the season would open in fewer than six months; and

Whereas, Coach Berson led the Gamecocks to a 13‑3‑1 record in the team’s first season, and a year later, the team posted a 14‑5‑0 record on the way to UofSC’s first appearance at the NCAA Tournament. In forty‑three seasons, he led Carolina to twenty‑two NCAA Tournaments and thirty‑five winning seasons; and

Whereas, as head coach at Carolina, he coached thirteen All‑American soccer players and fifteen freshman All‑Americans, and since 2005, his student‑athletes have garnered seventy‑nine All‑Region honors and fifty‑nine All‑Conference USA honors; and

Whereas, Coach Berson coached eight hundred sixty‑four games of college soccer, accumulating five hundred twenty‑two wins, five hundred eleven of which were at UofSC; and

Whereas, the Gamecock soccer players also excelled in the classroom with thirty‑one Academic All‑American selections. His teams have twice posted the highest GPA in the nation and have earned twelve NSCAA Academic Team Awards. Since 2005, Carolina has had the highest GPA in the league six times; and

Whereas, in 2015, Coach Berson received two major honors: he was honored with the Bill Jeffrey Award from The National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA), given to an individual for outstanding service or achievement in college soccer, and he was inducted into South Carolina Lettermen’s Association Hall of Fame, where he joined six of his former players; and

Whereas, more than sixty‑five former players and their families came to Stone Stadium to wish farewell to their coach as he coached the last Carolina game of his final season on Saturday, April 17, 2021; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina Senate take great pleasure in extending best wishes to Mark Berson as he transitions to a richly deserved retirement and the leisurely pace of the days ahead. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, recognize and honor Mark Berson, head coach of the University of South Carolina men’s soccer team, upon the occasion of his retirement after forty‑three years of outstanding service to the university and to his players, and wish him continued success and happiness in all his future endeavors.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Coach Mark Berson.

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