**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE REMARKABLE MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA BLACK BELT HALL OF FAME FOR FORTY YEARS OF OUTSTANDING COMMITMENT TO TEACHING THE CHILDREN OF OUR STATE THE SIGNIFICANT LIFE SKILLS LEARNED THROUGH THE DISCIPLINE OF MARTIAL ARTS.

Whereas, the South Carolina General Assembly is pleased to learn that the outstanding members of the South Carolina Black Belt Hall of Fame have been training the state’s youth for forty years; and

Whereas, comprised of notable leaders and some of the most honored black belts in the state’s martial arts history, the South Carolina Black Belt Hall of Fame was founded by Keith Vitali, Mike Genova, and Bobby Tucker, and from its inception in the 1980s, these founding members gave the organization immediate national credibility; and

Whereas, this elite organization recognizes South Carolinians who are highly respected black belt recipients. Many of these exclusive black‑belt members motivated, influenced, and inspired others by their own successes, while others dedicated their lives to molding students through the martial arts by owning, operating, or teaching at martial arts schools; and

Whereas, the first president of the South Carolina Black Belt Hall of Fame, Keith Vitali started the first Karate Club at the University of South Carolina in the 1970s. A former nationally recognized three‑time number‑one‑rated competitor, he authored anti‑bullying books and videos and starred in and produced several martial arts movies; and

Whereas, Mike Genova, the current president of the South Carolina Black Belt Hall of Fame, is a former national top‑ten‑karate competitor, who has owned and operated a successful karate school for forty years; and

Whereas, the other members include Bobby Tucker, a former top‑ten‑national karate competitor, who was one of the nation’s fastest fighters in tournament history. A former nationally rated tournament competitor and SEKA man of the year, Sam Chapman has owned a karate school for over forty years and started the South Carolina Karate Tournament Circuit. Bruce Brutschy, one of the top former heavyweight tournament champions in the country, served as past president of the Columbia Citizens Police Academy. Marty Knight, a successful karate school owner, won championships and gold medals all over the world and has trained more female world karate champions than any other instructor in America. Michael Goldman began his karate training at the University of South Carolina Karate Club, and he serves as the executive producer of the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences Hall of Fame Ceremonies and has produced the Super Bowl Half‑Time Show. Tony Thomas, a retired school teacher, owns and operates a successful karate school in Columbia, having taught thousands of students and promoted over two hundred fifty black belts. A former top‑ten competitor in the nation, John Orck was a member of the first University Karate Club, was named an All‑American football player for Presbyterian College, and is currently a radio analyst for Blue Hose athletics. Tony Young is a successful karate school owner and former nationally‑rated lightweight karate champion who is devoted to community service and martial arts tournament promotions. Dewey Earwood is a former forms and weapons karate champion who owns and operates a karate school, where he has taught thousands of students and promoted over one hundred fifty black belts. A former lightweight national champion, Joey Shiflett amassed well over two thousand trophies and has been competing for thirty‑five years. Jerry Rhome, a former world heavyweight champion full‑contact fighter, is remembered as one of the best heavyweight full‑contact fighters of all time. Joe Beckham operates a successful karate school and teaches at rape crisis centers in his community. One of the pioneers of the sport in the State, Virgil Kimmey taught karate for over forty years, changing the lives of children and adults; and

Whereas, the General Assembly appreciates the dedication of these outstanding men and congratulates them on forty years of teaching their students perseverance, fearlessness, virtue, and leadership, invaluable lessons for life, both on and off the mat. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring:

That the members of the South Carolina General Assembly, by this resolution, recognize and honor the remarkable members of the South Carolina Black Belt Hall of Fame for forty years of outstanding commitment to teaching the children of our State the significant life skills learned through the discipline of martial arts.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Mike Genova.

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