**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE LIONEL SMITH, LTD., OF AIKEN AT THE CELEBRATION OF ITS FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY AND TO CONGRATULATE THE COMPANY ON FOUR DECADES OF OUTSTANDINGLY SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEURIAL ENDEAVORS.

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives is pleased to learn that Lionel Smith, Ltd., a downtown Aiken landmark and well‑known men’s clothier, turned forty years old in March 2016; and

Whereas, behind every successful business is a visionary with a plan. Lionel Smith (“Smitty” to all Aikenites) is the visionary legend behind Lionel Smith, Ltd. A man with an infectious smile and a genuine interest in every person he meets, Smitty established Lionel Smith, Ltd., in March 1976; and

Whereas, born and raised in North Carolina, Smitty moved to Edgefield when his father purchased the Edgefield Bottling Company in 1959. The move proved providential for him. At Edgefield High School, he met Dot Burton, who became his high school sweetheart, later his wife and “best friend of fifty‑five years.” He also took a part‑time job at the Belk Edgefield store; and

Whereas, because he loved clothes and was good at selling and getting on with people, he progressed in his Belk training and took over management of the boys’ department at the Belk Aiken store in 1961. He learned much from early business mentors Manley Peeler and Manning Owen. In the late 1940s, Mr. Owen opened a men’s store with Charles Thomas to create Owen‑Thomas. In time, Ernest McCreary joined the firm, and the enlarged partnership enticed Smitty to leave Belk in 1965; and

Whereas, in 1966, Smitty and Ken Akin were running the store and buying the merchandise. In 1971, Smitty formed a partnership of his own with two Augusta businessmen who owned high‑end men’s clothing stores. As a result, LeGrande’s opened in August 1971 and occupied space on Laurens Street near what is now the Hotel Aiken. Smitty opened his own business, Lionel Smith, Ltd., in 1976; and

Whereas, in 1981, Smitty restored the fire‑gutted Abe Wolf’s Famous Brand Shoes and enlarged it. Lionel Smith, Ltd., opened in the restored building in 1982 and over the years has continued to prove its staying power through exceptional customer service and tasteful merchandise of high quality; and

Whereas, Smitty’s prominence in, and commitment to, Aiken is evident in the honors he has received over the years from the community. In 1982, he was named Small Businessman of the Year by the Greater Aiken Chamber of Commerce and in 1990 Retailer of the Year by the Men’s Apparel Club of the Carolinas. Still an Aiken force in 2013, he was again honored by the Greater Aiken Chamber when he was named Man of the Year; and

Whereas, Smitty and Dot Smith are the parents of two children, Van and Kelli, the former of whom now runs the store with his business partner, Danny Minolfo. However, Smitty, having no thoughts of retirement, still works at the Laurens Street store on the corner of the Alley. He’s still the legend behind the store, still the man who remembers everyone’s name, still the salesman who can nail the size of his customer without a measuring tape; and

Whereas, appreciative of its longtime contributions to the prosperity of the Palmetto State, the House of Representatives takes great pleasure in honoring Lionel Smith, Ltd., and its dynamic entrepreneurial heart, Mr. Lionel “Smitty” Smith, on the occasion of the company’s fortieth anniversary. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, recognize Lionel Smith, Ltd., of Aiken at the celebration of its fortieth anniversary and congratulate the company on four decades of outstandingly successful entrepreneurial endeavors.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Lionel Smith, Ltd.

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