**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO EXPRESS THE PROFOUND SORROW OF THE MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES UPON THE PASSING OF W. LEE CATOE OF COLUMBIA AND TO EXTEND THE DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO HIS FAMILY AND MANY FRIENDS.

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of W. Lee Catoe of Columbia on June 3, 2021, at the age of seventy‑four; and

Whereas, born in Flat Rock, South Carolina, on March 26, 1947, Willie Lee Catoe was the youngest son of the Reverend Henry and Carrie Drakeford Catoe’s eleven children. He received his early religious training at Flat Rock Missionary Baptist Church in Westville, South Carolina; and

Whereas, upon relocation to Columbia, he joined Second Calvary Baptist Church, where he was a faithful, active member and served on the Second Calvary Board of Deacons. After graduating from Jackson High School in Camden, he continued his education at Edward Waters College in Jacksonville, Florida, where he earned a bachelor’s degree, afterwards answering the call of his country to join the U.S. Army for service in Vietnam. Later, he obtained a master’s degree from the University of South Carolina. He further studied at Arizona State University, the University of Georgia in Athens, and Emory University in Georgia; and

Whereas, Lee retired from the Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce (GCCC), where he served as vice president for community affairs and special assistant to the president/CEO. Prior to retirement, he served as metro director of the National Alliance of Businessmen and at the GCCC as executive director of the Community Relations Council. While at the chamber, he was instrumental in the implementation of the current form of city government, the 4‑2‑1 Plan. He then went to work under Governor Carroll Campbell as executive assistant to the governor in the Office of Executive Policy and Programs. While working there, he was appointed as the governor’s designee to serve as a member of the University of South Carolina Board of Trustees; and

Whereas, further, he worked as a member of the South Carolina Workers’ Compensation Commission and then at the South Carolina Department of Alcohol & Other Drug Abuse Services as director, where he expanded numerous programs and grants and educated youth about the dangers of alcohol abuse. His community service activities were many and included membership on the board of directors of the Columbia Convention and Visitors Bureau, Columbia Museum, and Cultural Arts Council. He was a member of the Governor’s Juvenile Justice Advisory Council and consulted with the South Carolina School Board Association, Benedict College, and the National Conference of Christians & Jews; and

Whereas, in recognition of his service, Lee was presented with numerous awards, including the Order of the Palmetto, which is the highest civilian honor given to citizens of South Carolina, and the Outstanding Black Alumnus award, presented by the Greater University of South Carolina Alumni Association; and

Whereas, away from the office, he was an avid outdoorsman and enjoyed spending time with his family, especially his grandchildren, who called him “Papi”; and

Whereas, Lee Catoe leaves to cherish his memory his wife, Dr. Stephanie Lewis Catoe; his son, Lee Toddson Catoe (Shana); his three grandchildren; and a host of other family members and friends. He 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 W. Lee Catoe of Columbia and extend the deepest sympathy to his family and many friends.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Dr. Stephanie Lewis Catoe for the family.

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