**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR KAREN ALEXANDER, FOUNDER AND CEO OF THE AUNTIE KAREN FOUNDATION, FOR HER SUCCESSFUL USE OF THE ARTS TO EDUCATE AND EMPOWER CHILDREN ACROSS THE GLOBE.

Whereas, the South Carolina General Assembly is pleased to learn of the fine work being done by Karen Alexander through the Auntie Karen Foundation, which uses the arts to educate and empower children and youth in the Palmetto State and beyond; and

Whereas, Karen Alexander left an eleven‑year corporate position with Xerox Corporation to pursue her passion to educate utilizing the arts. Prior to working for Xerox, she spent six years as a first‑grade teacher at James B. Edwards Elementary School in Mt. Pleasant; and

Whereas, entertainment and the arts have always been a part of her life. As a child growing up in Charleston, she sang often in the church with her family. While studying at the University of South Carolina, of which she is a graduate, Karen was an active member of the school’s pop singing group, Carolina Alive; and

Whereas, in the professional arena, she has toured the United States, Europe, and South America, and her audiences have greeted her enthusiastically in places as diverse as Greece, Romania, Brazil, and Jamaica. In August 1995, Karen organized the contemporary jazz and R&B band Straight Ahead; and

Whereas, in 2001, she founded Auntie Karen Inc., an educational entertainment company, and the Auntie Karen Foundation was certified as a 501(c)(3) charitable corporation by the State of South Carolina on October 31, 2001. The foundation’s mission is to create and implement a series of reproducible community‑outreach programs designed to empower, enlighten, and educate children across the globe through the arts; and

Whereas, the Legends of... Concert Series, held at Columbia’s Koger Center for the Arts as the foundation’s signature fundraiser, presents legendary awarding‑winning recording artists of jazz, rhythm and blues, gospel, or blues fame, with a special emphasis on jazz legends. Inaugurated in 2004 with singer Roberta Flack, the series this year will feature Gladys Knight in concert on February 22 and, as always, is expected to attract people throughout South Carolina, Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, and Tennessee; and

Whereas, other programs of the Auntie Karen Foundation include Auntie Karen’s Young Entrepreneurs Conference, Auntie Karen’s Artpreneurs/Technopreneurs, Gordon’s Garden (which teaches gardening and healthful eating to children), and, presently under development, Auntie Karen Hits the Road: An African‑American Mobile Museum; and

Whereas, grateful for her dedication to training and inspiring the next generation of entrepreneurs, as well as her commitment to encouraging healthy living in youth, the General Assembly takes great pleasure in saluting Karen Alexander and Auntie Karen’s Foundation on more than a decade of service to the young people of South Carolina and beyond. Now, therefore,

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

That the members of the South Carolina General Assembly, by this resolution, recognize and honor Karen Alexander, founder and CEO of the Auntie Karen Foundation, for her successful use of the arts to educate and empower children across the globe.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Karen Alexander.

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