**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO CELEBRATE THE OCCASION OF THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INCEPTION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA AIKEN, TO CONGRATULATE AND COMMEND THE FACULTY, STAFF, AND STUDENT BODY FOR A HALF CENTURY OF PRODUCING QUALITY GRADUATES, AND TO WISH THE UNIVERSITY ALL THE BEST IN THE COMING YEARS.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives are pleased to learn that the University of South Carolina Aiken has reached the milestone of its fiftieth anniversary; and

Whereas, in 1961, the citizens of the Aiken community voiced the need for a local institution of higher education and campaigned their local legislators to enact legislation to found a college in the area. A governing board was thereafter formed, and the Aiken County Commission for Higher Education continues to oversee the mission of the university to this day; and

Whereas, the University of South Carolina Aiken became the fourth campus founded of the eight campuses that now comprise the University of South Carolina system; and

Whereas, three full‑time faculty members, a secretary, and one hundred thirty students joined for the university’s first academic semester in September 1961. Classes were held for the first eleven years of the school’s history in Banksia, a former winter‑colony mansion in downtown Aiken; and

Whereas, the need for a new physical location for a campus arose as enrollment grew, and in 1972 the university purchased property from Graniteville Company and moved to its current location. One multipurpose building was constructed, and over the years the campus has grown to occupy more than twenty buildings and athletic facilities including the Pickens-Salley House, home of former Governor Francis W. Pickens, which was built in 1829 and later moved to the university campus where it houses the administrative offices; and

Whereas, in 1977, the University of South Carolina Aiken became fully accredited as a senior college and granted its first baccalaureate degrees. Master’s degree programs began to be offered in 1994, and at present the university offers more than thirty degrees and programs available to prospective students; and

Whereas, athletics have been a part of student life since the university’s founding, and in 1990 the University of South Carolina Aiken achieved NCAA Division II status and became a charter member of the highly competitive Peach Belt Conference. Today, the school hosts eleven varsity men’s and women’s sports teams, including the three‑time national champion men’s golf team; and

Whereas, the university has been ably led by four extraordinary men who have overseen the campus with great care and vision. They include Mr. Chris Sharp, from 1961‑1962; Mr. Bill Casper, from 1963‑1983; Dr. Robert Alexander, from 1983‑2000; and Dr. Thomas Hallman, who currently leads the university; and

Whereas, today, the University of South Carolina Aiken ranks as the number one baccalaureate college in the South, according to U.S. News & World Report and boasts an enrollment of more than three thousand two hundred students; and

Whereas, truly embodying its motto, “focused on you!”, the University of South Carolina Aiken provides its students with a quality education in an intimate, friendly setting. The members of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina are proud to laud the many accomplishments of this fine institution, and expect to hear of further successes in the future. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the House of Representatives of the State of South Carolina, by this resolution, celebrate the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the inception of the University of South Carolina Aiken, congratulate and commend the faculty, staff, and student body for a half century of producing quality graduates, and wish the university all the best in the coming years.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Dr. Thomas Hallman, Chancellor of the University of South Carolina Aiken.

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