**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR JAMES W. PRUITT, THE OWNER OF PRUITT’S GROCERY, UPON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT AFTER YEARS OF OUTSTANDING SERVICE AND TO WISH HIM CONTINUED SUCCESS AND HAPPINESS IN ALL HIS FUTURE ENDEAVORS.

Whereas, it is altogether fitting that the South Carolina House of Representatives should pause in its deliberations to express gratitude to James W. Pruitt for his meaningful contributions to the Beaufort community as owner and operator of Pruitt’s Grocery; and

Whereas, as a result of various circumstances, and the hard work and determination of James Pruitt, Pruitt’s Grocery remained in operation by the same family from the very storefront on the corner of Greene and Church Streets in downtown Beaufort which Harry and Rebecca Smith had opened over nine decades ago; and

Whereas, one of four sons born to John and Bessie Pruitt, James graduated from Beaufort High School in 1953. His mother, Bessie, was reared by Rebecca and Harry Smith, her aunt and uncle; and

Whereas, when the Smith family moved away from Beaufort, the Pruitts took over the store, where James remembers working as a student. After he completed high school, he wanted a livelihood, so he bought Bess’ Cash and Carry, a grocery store on Ribaut Road, and changed the name to James W. Pruitt; and

Whereas, in 1951, his late brother Ed took over the Green Street store and ran it until he passed away in 1980. That store was closed until six years later when Beaufort County bought the land where James had his store on Ribaut Road, and he moved his business to the building on Greene Street which his mother had left to him; and

Whereas, over the years, Pruitt’s Grocery, a small and cozy window into the past, sold mostly meats, groceries, and candy to folks who venture from places across Beaufort County, like Lady’s Island, Burton, and Port Royal, for the meat; and

Whereas, customers, often looking for a bit of conversation, would receive old‑fashioned service from Mr. Pruitt, who chatted while dispensing items shelved behind the counters. He weighed out the meat orders, wrapped them, and handed them to his customers; and

Whereas, a handsome and affable yet self‑effacing Southern gentleman, James Pruitt never married and demurs to admit that he has been the most eligible bachelor in town; and

Whereas, while some cases held sundry supplies, another old fashioned case showcased an assortment of cures for ailments: sweet oil, castor oil, mineral oil, hydrogen peroxide, magnesium citrate, aspirin, Epsom salts, petroleum jelly, and Vaseline. Nearby shelves held a 1981 Farmers’ Almanac, old books and Reader’s Digests, and a plethora of canned goods with a collection of old bottles on the top shelf and a set of 1964 Dr. Pepper calendars taped on the wall; and

Whereas, the community icon and landmark in recent years opened six days a week from mid afternoon until evening to accommodate when his customers came, but on Saturday, May 30, 2015, Mr. Pruitt closed his doors for the last time, the end of nearly a century of service; and

Whereas, all of his life, Mr. Pruitt has been a faithful parishioner at the Parish Church of St. Helena, and since he had heart surgery in 1999, he has lived with his friends John and Betty Barton; and

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives is grateful for James Pruitt’s unparalleled commitment to the Beaufort community and for his exemplary entrepreneurial spirit, and the members congratulate him as he begins his well‑earned retirement. 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, recognize and honor James W. Pruitt, the owner and operator of Pruitt’s Grocery, upon the occasion of his retirement after years of outstanding service and wish him continued success and happiness in all his future endeavors.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to James W. Pruitt.

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