**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE LANDER UNIVERSITY MEN’S BASKETBALL TEAM, COACHES, AND SCHOOL OFFICIALS FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY SEASON AND TO CONGRATULATE THEM FOR WINNING THE 2020 PEACH BELT CONFERENCE TOURNAMENT CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE.

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives is pleased to learn that the members of the Lander University men’s basketball team of Greenwood County took top honors at the Peach Belt Conference (PBC) Tournament held at Lander University’s Horne Arena in Greenwood on Sunday, March 8, 2020; and

Whereas, to the delight of their exuberant fans, the third‑seeded Lander Bearcats defeated the fifth‑seeded Columbus State University Cougars in a nail‑biting 76‑73 finish and ended their season with a 23‑8 record; and

Whereas, in the preseason PBC coaches’ poll, the Bearcats were picked ninth but finished third in the regular season standings, winning a school‑record fourteen league games; and

Whereas, winning the team’s first league championship since 2016, Lander defeated Flagler College from St. Augustine, Florida, Georgia College and State University from Milledgeville, Georgia, and Columbus State University from Columbus, Georgia; and

Whereas, four minutes into the championship game, Lander’s Sidney Robinson shot a three‑pointer, giving Lander a 10‑8 lead, the last Bearcat lead until five minutes before the game ended; and

Whereas, the Cougars dominated the floor in the first half with a 21‑3 run, giving Columbus State a 29‑13 advantage with less than nine minutes left in the period, and when the teams took to the lockers for halftime, the Bearcats were down 40‑27; and

Whereas, the Bearcats hit the floor in the second half with aggressive attention to the basket and a strong defense against the Cougars, hitting the backboards, pressing their opponents, and outscoring Columbus State 49‑33 in the second half; and

Whereas, even though Lander battled back and cut the Cougars’ lead to four points, 51‑47, with twelve and a half minutes of play left in the game, Columbus State pulled away by double digits again in the next three minutes at 60‑49; and

Whereas, with less than seven minutes of play left in the second half, Lander was still down by one at 60‑59, but the Bearcats managed to take their first lead since early in the game with five minutes to go, 64‑63; and

Whereas, Lander saved the best for last with some impressive play, and with two and a half minutes to spare, the Bearcats had a 72‑68 advantage; and

Whereas, with only eight seconds left, Lander had a 76‑70 lead until Columbus landed a trey with three seconds on the clock, and Lander took the conference title with a 76‑73 win; and

Whereas, after scoring 25 points in Saturday’s semifinal victory, senior Tyler Brevard posted 21 points for the Bearcats against Columbus, helping his team to recover from a 16‑point deficit and winning the PBC Tournament Most Valuable Player honor. Both Tyler Brevard and teammate DaJuan Moorer were named to the All‑Tournament team; and

Whereas, DaJuan Moorer added 15 points and shared Lander team‑high honors with nine rebounds; Elijah Alston scored all 12 of his points in the second half for the Bearcats; Deon Berrien scored all 10 of his points in the second half, grabbed nine rebounds, and led Lander with four assists. Sidney Robinson and LaRaymond Spivery each posted eight points in the championship game, and DeShundre Rucker put up two points for Lander; and

Whereas, in a sport that exacts strength, agility, and accuracy, first‑year Head Coach Drew Richards and his skilled coaching staff capitalized on their own athletic ability and training to forge a championship‑caliber team and teach these athletes valuable lessons that will put them in good stead throughout life; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives value the pride and recognition that the Lander basketball players have brought to their university and our State and look to hear of their continued accomplishments in the days ahead. Now therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, recognize and honor the Lander University men’s basketball team, coaches, and school officials for an extraordinary season and congratulate them for winning the 2020 Peach Belt Conference Tournament Championship title.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Dr. Richard E. Cosentino, president, and Coach Drew Richards.

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