**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR KENNY THOMAS, COACH OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA AIKEN BASEBALL TEAM, UPON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT AFTER THIRTY‑THREE YEARS OF OUTSTANDING COACHING.

Whereas, the South Carolina General Assembly has learned that Kenny Thomas will begin a well‑deserved retirement after thirty‑three years as a head baseball coach, the last twenty‑one of which have been as the highly‑regarded head coach for the University of South Carolina Aiken (USCA) Pacers; and

Whereas, Kenny Thomas began his collegiate baseball career by playing for Trevecca Nazarene College in Tennessee, where he earned NAIA All‑American honors his senior year as a catcher. In recognition of Thomas’s contributions to its baseball program, the college retired his jersey number and later enshrined him in its athletic Hall of Fame; and

Whereas, after graduating from college in 1978, Thomas embarked on a distinguished baseball coaching career with a Stan Musial summer league team. Over the course of nine seasons, he led his team to a national championship in 1985, a runner‑up finish in 1986, and a third‑place finish in 1984; and

Whereas, later, as head coach of Volunteer State Community College in Tennessee, Thomas led teams to the Junior College World Series and earned Junior College Athletic Association Eastern District Coach of the Year honors in 1995 and 1999; and

Whereas, with success came greater opportunity, and in 2000 Coach Thomas was lured to USCA to lead its baseball program. Early in his tenure at USCA, Coach Thomas oversaw the program’s transition from J. H. Satcher Field to the state‑of‑the‑art Roberto Hernandez Stadium in 2003, a massive shift from his first seasons of fundraising and working on the facilities himself prior to procuring a sponsor for the facilities; and

Whereas, Coach Thomas soon reestablished the Pacers as a force in the Peach Belt Conference and a perennial top‑25 team in NCAA Division II, twice holding the number one national ranking. Under this leadership, Coach Thomas led the Pacers to win forty or more games in each of seven seasons, including a high mark of 47‑17 in 2008. His USCA teams made nine NCAA Tournament appearances, won the 2009 and 2013 Peach Belt Conference (PBC) regular season championships, and made appearances in the 2007, 2018, and 2019 PBC Tournament Championships; and

Whereas, a molder of successful players, Kenny Thomas coached eighteen All‑American honorees, one hundred and six all‑conference performers, two PBC Player of the Year honorees, a PBC Pitcher of the Year winner, and three PBC Freshman of the Year winners. Sixty‑eight of his former players were drafted by professional organizations; and

Whereas, Coach Thomas retires with an overall record of 1258‑626 in over thirty seasons as a head coach and as the winningest coach in USCA baseball history, having led the Pacers to a 738‑407 record in his twenty‑one seasons. His win total ranks around the top twenty‑five for active Division II head coaches; and

Whereas, grateful for the years of unparalleled dedication Kenny Thomas has devoted to USCA and the sport of baseball, the South Carolina General Assembly takes great pleasure in extending best wishes to him as he begins a richly deserved retirement at the end of the 2021 season. 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 Kenny Thomas, coach of the University of South Carolina Aiken baseball team, upon the occasion of his retirement after thirty‑three years of outstanding coaching.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Coach Kenny Thomas.

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