**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO CONGRATULATE MOTHER WILLIE MAE RIVERS ON THE GRAND OCCASION OF HER NINETY‑SIXTH BIRTHDAY, TO RECOGNIZE HER FOR HER SERVICE TO HER CHURCH AND COMMUNITY, AND TO WISH HER A JOYOUS BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives are delighted to learn that Mother Willie Mae Rivers will celebrate her ninety‑sixth birthday on February 20, 2022; and

Whereas, a native of Berkeley County, Willie Mae Rivers was born on February 20, 1926, and is the daughter of the late Robert and Anna Mitchell Smalls. At the age of fifteen, she married David Rivers, and remained steadfast in their marriage for almost fifty‑six years until he passed away in 1997. Their union was blessed with twelve children, two boys and ten girls; twenty grandchildren; and many great‑grandchildren and great‑great‑grandchildren; and

Whereas, Mother Rivers’ Christian experience began as a child while she was attending the Mt. Zion AME Church Sunday School. Because of her interest and dedication to her church, she served as a delegate to many conventions. During this time, the presiding Elder remarked, “This child will one day be a great leader; she has a mark on her life”; and

Whereas, in 1946 after attending a revival where she was baptized, Willie Mae became a member of the Calvary Church of God in Christ and shortly thereafter, was appointed Church Mother; and

Whereas, as a devoted member and supporter of her church, Mother Rivers was chosen to serve as district missionary and later as assistant supervisor to the late Mother Alice Marie Saunders. In 1968, she was appointed supervisor of the Department of Women for the South Carolina Jurisdiction of the Church of God in Christ. Through the years, Mother Rivers served at the national level in numerous capacities, and in 1997, was appointed as the International General Supervisor where she served until 2017; and

Whereas, Mother Rivers is a true servant of God and has touched the lives of many throughout her church and community. For many years, she spread the Gospel through the “Evangelist Speaks” ministry broadcast on radio stations in the Southeast. In addition, she founded the Community Christian Women and Men Fellowship as a way to reach people in all walks of life through spiritual enrichment, by aiding those less fortunate, and by providing love and comfort to the bereaved during their time of sorrow; and

Whereas, the members of the House of Representatives recognize that the success of the State of South Carolina, the strength of its communities, and the vitality of American society as a whole depend, in great measure, upon the dedication of individuals like Mother Willie Mae Rivers who use their talents and resources to serve others. Gratefully, the House of Representatives acknowledges Mother Rivers’ invaluable and far‑reaching contributions to the betterment of the Palmetto State and this country. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, congratulate Mother Willie Mae Rivers on the grand occasion of her ninety‑sixth birthday, recognize her for her service to her church and community, and wish her a joyous birthday celebration.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Mother Willie Mae Rivers.

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