**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO EXPRESS THE PROFOUND SORROW OF THE MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES UPON THE PASSING OF THE REVEREND DR. WILLIE DENNIS, SR., OF SUMTER COUNTY AND TO EXTEND THE DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO HIS FAMILY AND MANY FRIENDS.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of the Reverend Dr. Willie Dennis, Sr., of Sumter County on January 18, 2022, at the venerable age of eighty‑six; and

Whereas, born in Rembert on June 11, 1935, the young Willie Dennis was the son of the Reverend Abe Dennis, Sr., and Sarah Alston Dennis. He received Christ at an early age and became a member of Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church in Rembert, where his father was pastor. He was educated in the public schools of Sumter County and graduated from Lincoln High School. After graduation, he enlisted in the United States Army, where he served faithfully until his honorable discharge in 1957; and

Whereas, in 1969, God called Reverend Dennis to preach the gospel. He served as pastor of Sandy Run Baptist Church, as well as of Barnettsville Baptist Church, prior to being chosen to lead Union Missionary Baptist Church in Rembert, where he labored tirelessly for forty years. He also served as interim pastor of Saint Mark Missionary Baptist Church for eighteen months. He retired in 2014 as pastor and graciously served as pastor emeritus at Union until his death; and

Whereas, the Reverend Dr. Willie Dennis, Sr., proved to be a devoted leader throughout Sumter County and its surrounding communities. A volunteer pastor for Wateree Correctional Institution, he also had been an active and devoted servant of Wateree Baptist Association, Lower Division, where he served in various posts, including as board member, clerk of the board, chair of the executive board, vice moderator, and moderator; and

Whereas, in recognition of his lifetime of distinguished service, Reverend Dennis received a presidential citation from Morris College in 2006. In 2008, he also received an honorary Doctor of Divinity from Carolina Theological Bible Institute; and

Whereas, he was married to the late Earnestine Rembert Dennis until her passing, after which God saw fit to bless him with another helpmeet, Gardenia Richardson Dennis; and

Whereas, Reverend Dennis leaves to cherish his memory his wife of twenty‑three years, Gardenia; five daughters, Janie (Marion) McGainey, Sherry Glasscho, Andrea Thomas, Mary (Larry) Alexander, and Mary (Garrett) Elliott; three sons, Eugene (Andrea) Dennis, Willie Dennis, Jr., and Bryant (Lakeshia) Dennis; twenty‑two grandchildren; twenty‑two great‑grandchildren; two stepchildren, Charlotte Smith and Bridget Smith‑Brumfield; and a host of other devoted family members, friends, colleagues, and members of his former churches, all of whom will miss him dearly. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, express their profound sorrow upon the passing of the Reverend Dr. Willie Dennis, Sr., of Sumter County and extend the deepest sympathy to his family and many friends.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Mrs. Gardenia Richardson Dennis for the family.

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