**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO CONGRATULATE LEILA SMITH OF GILLISONVILLE ON THE OCCASION OF HER RECENT NINETY‑EIGHTH BIRTHDAY AND TO WISH HER MUCH HAPPINESS IN THE DAYS AHEAD.

Whereas, on January 7, 2022, Leila Smith of Gillisonville awakened to the celebration of a landmark event: her ninety‑eighth birthday; and

Whereas, when Leila Smith was a child, she was not allowed to ride the bus to school. She had to walk alongside her cousins and other local Black children as they watched the school bus pass by. Sometimes, she couldn’t make it all the way to the school, so her cousins would take turns carrying her until they got there; and

Whereas, until she finished seventh grade, the young Leila attended school in Jasper County, with all grades in one building, There were only three teachers, and she would help the younger students with their work when she could; and

Whereas, finding it necessary to move in with a Beaufort County family member to continue school, she finished 11th grade at Beaufort’s Robert Smalls High School. Further, she completed the requirements for a GED, later becoming a certified nursing assistant and a minister of the gospel. Leila also worked in the Jasper County schools as a substitute teacher, thus continuing to help children learn; and

Whereas, in 1941, Leila married her high school sweetheart, the late Bishop Daniel Lazarus Smith, and the Lord blessed the couple with a fine family: two biological children, one adopted son, two foster daughters, and a niece they raised as a daughter. Leila is a first cousin of Jasper County native General Lloyd “Fig” Newton, with whom she spent many of her growing‑up years; and

Whereas, when Leila became Mrs. Smith, she stayed at home while her husband worked as a farmer. He also attended a Civilian Conservation Corps camp in Saluda, there learning several trades like woodworking and shorthand; and

Whereas, for the 1948‑1949 school year, Leila and her husband helped change the way Black children got to school by purchasing a bus for them to ride. The bus was full, with all seats occupied. Alas, the bus was burned in their yard, so they were not able to use it for a second school year. The Smiths paid for the damaged bus by selling the crops they grew. They never found out what happened to the bus, but the next school year, the county bought a bus and hired a driver; and

Whereas, Leila Smith is glad to have been able to see things change, not only in Jasper County but also throughout the country, in her lifetime. She has seen Black citizens being able to work in the banks and restaurants and in other jobs, the same jobs she had not been able to do earlier in her life. She appreciates the improvements that have been made in her lifetime and hopes the improvements continue. As to how these continued improvements are to come to pass, Leila believes that younger generations must look to God for guidance; and

Whereas, it is a great pleasure to honor this daughter of South Carolina at the celebration of her ninety‑eighth birthday and to join with her family and friends in congratulating her on reaching this important life milepost. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, congratulate Leila Smith of Gillisonville on the occasion of her recent ninety‑eighth birthday and wish her much happiness in the days ahead.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Leila Smith.

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