**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO EXPRESS THE PROFOUND SORROW OF THE MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES UPON THE PASSING OF WILLIAM DAVID BILTON OF COLUMBIA, TO CELEBRATE HIS LIFE, 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 by the passing of William David Bilton of Columbia on February 18, 2022, at the age of sixty‑five; and

Whereas, born November 6, 1956, in Orangeburg, William Bilton was the son of James Woodrow “Jim” Bilton, Sr., and Lurene Stephens Bilton; and

Whereas, having received his high school diploma from St. George High School in 1975, he obtained his undergraduate degree in political science at the University of South Carolina in 1979 and his Juris Doctorate at the University of South Carolina School of Law in 1987; and

Whereas, William dedicated his life to public service which began with his service as an assistant solicitor in the 16th Circuit Solicitor’s Office. He went on to establish the South Carolina Commission on Prosecution Coordination and built it from the ground up. In this capacity, he reached across the aisle better than anyone and worked with all sides of an issue to reach sustainable compromises, and his contributions to the criminal justice system in this State cannot be understated; and

Whereas, William was an active member of the National Association of Prosecutor Coordinators and served at one time as its President. With his trademark hilarious sense of humor and gregarious nature, the association likely did not know what they got themselves into at the time. He was incredibly hardworking and thorough in all he undertook to accomplish, and even though he was humble, there were many accomplishments during his professional career; and

Whereas, William was a firm believer in second chances, himself twenty years sober at the time of his death. He had a hand in the creation of a number of diversion and treatment court programs and community services which significantly impacted and even saved the lives of many. He contributed to criminal and juvenile justice legislation for more than a quarter of a century alongside his dear friend, Jeff Moore, who represented the Sheriffs’ Association. Rarely did you see one without the other, their professional and personal friendship enduring the test of time; and

Whereas, he was particularly proud of his efforts regarding expungements of criminal records after a period of time without additional convictions, again giving those deserving of a second chance the ability to reshape their life’s trajectory and become a productive member of society. His legal acumen and brilliant mind combined into a one-of-a-kind rarity of a man who left his fingerprints on the criminal law of this State; and

Whereas, in recognition of his spirit of excellence and dedicated service to the people of South Carolina, in 2011 William Bilton was granted the Order of the Palmetto, South Carolina’s highest civilian award. It is hard to imagine one more deserving of this award; and

Whereas, William was a faithful member of Shandon Methodist Church, adored his family above all else, and also enjoyed history, government, politics, and football -- especially his beloved Gamecocks; and

Whereas, he leaves to cherish his memory his wife, Jan Tate Bilton; two children, Lauren Bilton Goldman (Anthony) and William Whitaker “Will” Bilton II; two grandchildren, David Allyn Goldman and Nathan Traxler Goldman; and a host of other family members and friends; and

Whereas, William Bilton will be greatly missed by all who were privileged to know and go along with him for the ride. And, what a ride it was, always in a Bilton Ford of course. The members and staff of the General Assembly will not forget their dear friend and hope that his reward for a life well and fully lived includes the companionship of a “yellow dog” and socks that never slide down. 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 William David Bilton of Columbia, celebrate his life, 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. Jan Tate Bilton for the family.

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