**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO CONGRATULATE LEROY JOHNSON OF WILLIAMSBURG COUNTY ON THE OCCASION OF HIS NINETIETH BIRTHDAY AND TO WISH HIM MUCH HAPPINESS IN THE DAYS AHEAD.

Whereas, on April 17, 2022, LeRoy Johnson of Williamsburg County will awaken to the celebration of a milestone event, his ninetieth birthday; and

Whereas, the legendary LeRoy Johnson, a prolific singer, songwriter, and bandleader, as well as an iconic mentor in the soul and blues music circuit, worked his way to the top of blues and R&B music, earning the stage name “Soul Power”; and

Whereas, born in Bonneau on April 17, 1932, LeRoy was the youngest child of the Reverend and Mrs. Adam Johnson. LeRoy’s father was a prominent pastor who died when the young LeRoy was only 3 years of age; his mother was a homemaker. Leroy was educated in the Bonneau and St. Stephen schools; and

Whereas, growing up in poverty during the Great Depression, he worked for pennies at whatever odd jobs he could find. Cutting timber, picking cotton, and working as a local mechanic were some of the jobs he held. Growing up black in the rural South, LeRoy turned to religion and music. He gave his life to the Lord and joined Sumter Chapel in Bonneau. He taught himself to play guitar, piano, and harmonica, and by the age of 9, he was able to buy his first guitar. He formed a gospel group called the Dixie Thunderbirds and began singing at local churches with his brother Clarence. This is where he developed his powerful and uniquely emotive voice; and

Whereas, as a teenager in 1950, he formed his first band, called LeRoy and the Lovers, and later a band called LeRoy Johnson and the Mighty Great Ones. They immediately hit the road, playing at house parties and touring the Southeast, while opening for such legendary musicians as Sam Cooke, Joe Simon, the Kelly Brothers, Betty Swan, and the Drifters; and

Whereas, in addition to writing songs and playing music, LeRoy became the top D.J. in the Southeast market. He played four to five nights a week throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. This schedule earned him the title “The Man With the Two Million Dollar Sound System.” LeRoy is a flashy showman, incredible songwriter, and soulful blues singer; and

Whereas, in 2002, LeRoy, with the assistance of his son Shantia Johnson and daughter Andrea Johnson, released his hit album *It’s Never Too Late*, with songs such as “Come Back Home,” “Looking Good Tonight,” “Fast Fingaz,” and “Precious Lord”; and

Whereas, a strong and amazing family man, husband, father, grandfather, and great‑grandfather, LeRoy has been married to his beautiful wife, Helen Whitfield‑Johnson, for more than sixty‑six years. They have five children, Glenda Johnson‑Woods (Fredrick), the late Joey Johnson, the late Andrea Johnson, Karen Johnson‑House (James), and Shantia Johnson. Further, they rejoice in six charming grandchildren, Delicia Croskey Holmes (George), Taquina McCall (Terrell), Traiana Johnson, Kiandria Johnson, Delea Johnson, and Immanuel Johnson, as well as four delightful great‑grandchildren. The family will celebrate LeRoy’s birthday with him on April 16; and

Whereas, at the celebration of his ninetieth birthday, it is a great pleasure to honor this son of South Carolina and join with his family and friends in congratulating him on reaching this important life milestone. 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, congratulate LeRoy Johnson of Williamsburg County on the occasion of his ninetieth birthday and wish him much happiness in the days ahead.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to LeRoy Johnson.

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