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**S. 313**

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Senate Resolution

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Summary: Dr. Tonya Matthews Black Excellence Award

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

 Date Body Action Description with journal page number

 2/4/2025 Senate Introduced and adopted (Senate Journal‑page 6)

View the latest  [legislative information](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/billsearch.php?billnumbers=313&session=126&summary=B)  at the website

**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[02/04/2025](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/313_20250204.docx)

A senate RESOLUTION

to recognize and honor black excellence award recipient Dr. Tonya M. Matthews.

Whereas, it is with great pleasure that the South Carolina Senate congratulates Dr. Tonya Matthews for receiving the Black Excellence Award, to be presented on Sunday, February 9, 2025, at the Black Excellence Brunch Charleston Edition; and

Whereas, a native of Washington, D.C., she received her BSE in biomedical and electrical engineering from Duke University, and a Ph.D. in biomedical engineering from Johns Hopkins University, in addition to earning a certificate in African/African American studies. She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated and The Links, Incorporated; and

Whereas, Dr. Matthews brings her “pre‑K through gray” philosophy of education alongside a deep respect for lifelong learning and radical empathy skill building to every appointment; and

Whereas, a nonprofit executive veteran, Dr. Matthews currently serves as president and chief executive officer of the International African American Museum located in Charleston at the historically sacred site of Gadsden’s Wharf. Under her leadership, the museum has become a champion of authentic, empathetic storytelling of African American history; and

Whereas, Dr. Matthews is a thought‑leader in institutional equity and inclusion frameworks, social entrepreneurship, and the intersectionality of formal and informal education. Her background as both poet and engineer has made her a highly sought after visioning partner on boards and community‑building projects, as well as a frequent public speaker and presenter for communities across all ages and venues; and

Whereas, Dr. Matthews’ storied career includes her role as associate provost for inclusive workforce development and director of the STEM Innovation Learning Center at Wayne State University and, prior to that, as the president and CEO of the Michigan Science Center. She is the founder of the STEMinista Project, a movement to engage girls in their future with STEM careers and tools and STEMinista Rising, which supports professional women in STEM fields and the colleagues who champion them; and

Whereas, her dedication to community and accomplishments is widely recognized. She has twice been noted as one of “Charleston’s Most Influential” by *Charleston Business Magazine* and honored as “Trailblazer” by *Career Mastered Magazine*. She leads by example, inspires others, and paves the way for progress, often in areas where there has been little or none; and

Whereas, she is a former member of the National Academy of Sciences board on science education and was appointed by both Democratic and Republican administrations to the National Assessment Governing Board; and

Whereas, Dr. Matthews has authored several articles and book chapters on inclusive board governance, nonprofit management, and fundraising. A published poet, she is included in *100 Best African American Poems* (2010) edited by Nikki Giovanni, and has been awarded an honorary doctorate from Central Michigan University for her career achievements and contributions; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina Senate greatly appreciate Dr. Matthews’ outstanding leadership and the positive changes she has made in each community where she has settled. She is known for planting roots on the side of town best suited for keeping an eye on progress. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, recognize and honor Black Excellence Award recipient Dr. Tonya M. Matthews.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Dr. Tonya M. Matthews.

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