**South Carolina General Assembly**

126th Session, 2025-2026

**H. 3990**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

House Resolution

Sponsors: Reps. G.M. Smith and Weeks

Document Path: LC-0073PH-GM25.docx

Introduced in the House on February 13, 2025

Adopted by the House on February 13, 2025

Summary: Sister Wimberly-retirement

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

Date Body Action Description with journal page number

2/13/2025 House Introduced and adopted ([House Journal‑page 36](h:\hj\20250213.docx))

View the latest  [legislative information](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/billsearch.php?billnumbers=3990&session=126&summary=B)  at the website

**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[02/13/2025](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/3990_20250213.docx)

A house RESOLUTION

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR Harriette “Sister” Heath Wimberly, founder of Friends of Swan Lake Gardens, UPON THE OCCASION OF HER RETIREMENT AFTER YEARS OF dedicated SERVICE, AND TO WISH HER CONTINUED SUCCESS AND HAPPINESS IN ALL HER FUTURE ENDEAVORS.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives have learned that Harriette “Sister” Heath Wimberly will begin a well-deserved retirement on Thursday, May 22, 2025, after years as the distinguished and highly regarded founder of Friends of Swan Lake Gardens; and

Whereas, a native of Sumter, she is the granddaughter of A. T. Heath Sr., a prominent Sumter resident who owned land on the north side of Liberty Street. In 1938, Mr. Heath generously deeded this land to the city, stipulating that his neighbor, Hamilton Carr Bland, who was already developing his adjacent property into a private fishing retreat adorned with Japanese irises, would also cultivate this newly acquired section into public gardens; and

Whereas, with a deep-rooted connection to the gardens tracing back to her grandfather, Ms. Wimberly has dedicated much of her life to the enhancement and preservation of Swan Lake Iris Gardens, a cherished landmark in her hometown. Mr. Heath’s collaboration led to the expansion of what is now known as Swan Lake Iris Gardens, encompassing around one hundred fifty acres of breathtaking landscapes; and

Whereas, inspired by her family’s legacy and her own passion for horticulture, Ms. Wimberly founded the Friends of Swan Lake Gardens, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting and enhancing the gardens. Under her leadership, the organization spearheaded numerous initiatives, including the development of the Master Gardeners’ section, the installation of entrance fences, and the introduction of a golf-cart tour to educate visitors about the history and significance of the lake and gardens. These efforts have enriched the visitor experience and ensured the gardens remain a vibrant part of the community; and

Whereas, Swan Lake Iris Gardens holds a special place in Sumter’s cultural and natural heritage. It is the only public park in the United States to feature all eight species of swans and boasts one of the nation’s most extensive plantings of Japanese irises, which bloom spectacularly each May. The gardens also host several annual festivals, including the Iris Festival, South Carolina’s oldest continuous festival, and the Fantasy of Lights during the holiday season, attracting visitors from near and far; and

Whereas, in recognition of her tireless dedication and significant contributions to the community, Sumter Mayor Joe McElveen declared May 25, 2019, as “Sister” Heath Wimberly Day. Earlier that month, she was honored with the Gamecock City Society Award, the highest accolade a citizen can receive from the city, celebrating her meaningful and lasting impact on Sumter; and

Whereas, through her unwavering commitment and visionary leadership, Ms. Wimberly has not only preserved her family’s legacy but has also ensured that Swan Lake Iris Gardens will continue to flourish as a beloved sanctuary for both residents and visitors, enriching the cultural fabric of Sumter for generations to come; and

Whereas, grateful for her many years of distinguished service to Swan Lake Iris Gardens, the South Carolina House of Representatives takes great pleasure in extending best wishes to Sister Wimberly as she transitions to a richly deserved retirement and the unhurried pace of the days ahead, and the members wish her many years of enjoyment in her well-earned retirement. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, recognize and honor Harriette “Sister” Heath Wimberly, founder of Friends of Swan Lake Gardens, upon the occasion of her retirement after years of dedicated service, and wish her continued success and happiness in all her future endeavors.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Harriette “Sister” Heath Wimberly.

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