



WHEREAS, on January 16, 2016, Mary Jo's Cloth Store, Inc. celebrated 65 years of business in Gaston County, and its inspirational founder, Margaret Colien "Mary Jo" Cloninger celebrated her 84th birthday; and,

WHEREAS, the multi-million dollar fabric company, whose reach extends from Gastonia to China, got its start in 1951, when a determined 19-year old Mary Jo talked her father into co-signing a \$500 bank loan for her start-up business inventory; and,

WHEREAS, Mary Jo's entrepreneurial spirit and vision conquered the odds then, and remains steadfast now, in an industry that is still male-dominated; and,

WHEREAS, with its humble beginnings in the back of her father's grocery store in Dallas, North Carolina, Mary Jo's Cloth Store grew and expanded into larger facilities over the years and even survived a fire in 1981; and,

WHEREAS, the store's reputation continued to grow and spread and in 1986, Mary Jo's Cloth Store relocated to the Gaston Mall, where it remains today, as a beloved and trusted source for craft and design customers; and,

WHEREAS, her son, Thomas Cloninger, CEO and CFO, and her nephew, Josh Cloninger, Assistant Manager, currently manage the operations of the 55-employee company, and carry on Mary Jo's legacy of earning customer loyalty through quality products, value and knowledgeable service.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Gaston County Board of Commissioners commends

MARY JO'S CLOTH STORE, INC.

on its 65th anniversary and further expresses its gratitude to Mary Jo Cloninger for her dedication and vision and for sharing her talents and passion for craft and design with the citizens of Gaston County and beyond!

Tom Keigher, Chairman

Chad Brown

Tracy L. Philbeck

Joe D. Carpenter

Mickey Price

Allen R. Fraley

Jason Williams, Vice-Chairman