

1 WHEREAS, along with his prodigious work ethic, Tom Benson was a man of vision
2 and creativity; he grasped the mechanics of finance, marketing, and demand, but he also had
3 the keen ability to recognize the economic potential in lucrative situations; and

4 WHEREAS, he graduated from St. Aloysius, later known as Brother Martin High
5 School, and from Loyola University with a degree in business administration; and

6 WHEREAS, his studies at Loyola were interrupted by his enlistment in the United
7 States Navy during World War II, when he was assigned as a seaman aboard the USS South
8 Dakota then honorably discharged at the conclusion of the conflict; and

9 WHEREAS, after graduation, he worked as an accountant to support his family, and
10 in 1948 went to work as a bookkeeper at Cathey Chevrolet, the nexus of what would become
11 his ownership of thirty-three car dealerships in Louisiana and Texas; and

12 WHEREAS, his astute business acumen expanded his holdings such as commercial
13 real estate and the banking industry to form Benson Financial World and other venues; and

14 WHEREAS, in 1985, Mr. Benson purchased the New Orleans Saints football
15 franchise; he made coaching and managerial changes that breathed new life into the team
16 which led to its first winning season and playoff appearance in 1987, then winning the NFL
17 XLIV Super Bowl (44th) on February 7, 2010, along with the special elation of being played
18 on home turf in the Superdome; and the city of New Orleans has hosted five Super Bowls;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, Saints football became his passion in later life and he kept an office at
21 the training facility; Benson could be found viewing practice sessions from his golf cart; and

22 WHEREAS, Tom Benson was delighted to be inducted into the Louisiana Sports
23 Hall of Fame in 2014 and a statue of his likeness holding up the Vince Lombardi Trophy
24 stands on the plaza outside the Superdome; and

25 WHEREAS, Mr. Benson later purchased the NBA New Orleans Hornets basketball
26 franchise in 2012, then changed its name to The Pelicans; ownership of both the Saints and
27 Pelicans made Benson the only individual to own two major professional sports franchises
28 in the same locale; and

29 WHEREAS, Tom Benson was the grateful recipient of a plethora of awards of every
30 stripe for entrepreneurial, cultural, and philanthropic activities; he had a tenderness in his

1 heart for those in need and without opportunities; and

2 WHEREAS, the establishment of the Gayle and Tom Benson Charitable Foundation
3 provided endowments in benevolent endeavors; numerous public and nonprofit agencies
4 benefitted from his generosity including local institutions of higher learning such as Loyola
5 and Tulane universities, Ochsner medical center cancer research, New Orleans Museum of
6 Art, the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, the Audubon Nature Institute, the Boys and
7 Girls Clubs of Southeast Louisiana, and numerous other charities benefitted from
8 anonymous donations; and

9 WHEREAS, in acknowledgment of his generosity, Tom Benson was honored by the
10 inclusion of his name associated with those entities he helped to develop or support, which
11 include Notre Dame Seminary, Yulman Stadium at Tulane, the Tom Benson Jesuit Center
12 at Loyola, Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium at the Pro Football Hall of Fame, the Science
13 and Technology complex at St. Mary's Dominican High School, Team Gleason House (ALS
14 advocacy), and in San Antonio, Texas, the School of Technology at Oblate School of
15 Theology, the University of the Incarnate Word, and Central Catholic High School; and

16 WHEREAS, as a man of unfaltering faith, Tom Benson contributed to the support
17 of many Roman Catholic entities and made extensive donations to educational institutions
18 and charitable endeavors; and Tom and Gayle Benson were the recipients of the Pro Ecclesia
19 et Pontifice medal from Pope Benedict XVI for their outstanding service to the Catholic
20 Church, the highest papal honor bestowed to a Catholic layperson; and

21 WHEREAS, Tom Benson loved New Orleans and its rich culture and history; he
22 assisted in its rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina with investment in many worthwhile
23 businesses; he bought a majority stake in the Dixie Brewing Company to revive the product
24 and bring it back into production; and

25 WHEREAS, he was a Mardi Gras reveler without par, who celebrated the carnival
26 season with great enthusiasm, and after Saints home victories in the Superdome, sporting a
27 black and gold parasol, he sashayed down the football field to the music of "When the Saints
28 Go Marching In" with a strut known as the "Benson Boogie"; and

29 WHEREAS, the people of the city of New Orleans expressed their high praise of
30 Tom Benson in many ways, however, a touching tribute to him at the announcement of his

