

2018 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 12

BY SENATOR BOUDREAUX

CONDOLENCES. Expresses condolences on the passing of Dr. Sammie Wayne Cospers.

A RESOLUTION

To express the sincere condolences of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the death of Sammie Wayne Cospers PhD, a veteran of the United States Navy and an outstanding academician over a long career in Louisiana.

WHEREAS, Sammie Wayne Cospers PhD passed away quietly on September 19, 2017, at the age of eighty-three; and

WHEREAS, Sammie Cospers was born on October 8, 1933, in Greggton, Texas, to Sammie Hampton Cospers and Mable Byrd Potter; and

WHEREAS, the Cospers family lived in Ville Platte and Eunice through his youth and upon graduating from Eunice High School in 1951, Dr. Cospers enlisted in the United States Navy where he served as a submariner on the United States Ship Corporal; and

WHEREAS, following his discharge from the U.S. Navy, Sammie Cospers enrolled in Southwestern Louisiana Institute, now the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, and he earned a bachelor of science degree, the first in his family to graduate from college; and

WHEREAS, not content with an undergraduate degree, Dr. Cospers enrolled in Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, where he earned his PhD in nuclear physics; and

WHEREAS, Sammie Cospers continued his education with post-doctoral research at

1 the University of California at Berkeley, where he and his colleagues discovered four new
2 isotopes, a significant contribution to the body of knowledge of nuclear physics; and

3 WHEREAS, Dr. Sammie Cospers and his family returned to Lafayette, Louisiana in
4 1967, where he began his post-doctoral academic career at his alma mater, at that point
5 known as the University of Southwestern Louisiana, where he held numerous academic and
6 administrative positions throughout his career; and

7 WHEREAS, at USL, Sammie Cospers served as the first dean of the newly created
8 department of physics, dean of liberal arts, and vice president of academic affairs, and after
9 more than twenty years at his alma mater, he retired from the university in 1989; and

10 WHEREAS, in the course of his service as chief academic officer from 1973 through
11 1989, Dr. Cospers convened a committee of faculty and administrators to assess the school's
12 goals, which became a blueprint for Dr. Cospers and then president Ray Authement to lead
13 USL in becoming a nationally respected university, conducting groundbreaking research and
14 focusing on superior scholarship; and

15 WHEREAS, the committee settled on the goals of expanding the university's existing
16 computer science and nursing programs, strengthening its ties to the oil and gas industry,
17 making supporting the preservation of South Louisiana's Cajun and Creole cultures a
18 priority, and assuming a role in the restoration of Louisiana's coastline; and

19 WHEREAS, Dr. Cospers's academic career was not over when he retired from the
20 university, he served as Commissioner of Higher Education for the state of Louisiana from
21 1990 through 1994, being tapped for the position by then governor, Charles E. "Buddy"
22 Roemer, and he also was named as interim chancellor of Baton Rouge Community College;
23 and

24 WHEREAS, Dr. Cospers was active in civic and community affairs in Louisiana,
25 serving as a member of the board of directors of the Council for A Better Louisiana and as
26 a member of the education committee of the Louisiana Association for Business and
27 Industry; and

28 WHEREAS, Sammie Cospers belonged to community groups in Lafayette including
29 membership in the Krewe of Gabriel, the Krewe of Zeus, and the Krewe of Triton, reigning
30 as King Triton XXIV in 2003; and

1 WHEREAS, Dr. Cospers first love was his family and he reveled in his devotion to
2 his wife of sixty-three years, Shirley Aguiard Cospers, and the couple lovingly raised three
3 daughters and enjoyed an active role in the lives of their daughters' families, including
4 grandchildren and great-grandchildren; and

5 WHEREAS, throughout his life, Sammie Wayne Cospers PhD preached the value of
6 education and learning by maintaining his passion for education, and he served as a tireless
7 advocate for the university that was his alma mater.

8 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana
9 does hereby express its sincere condolences upon the death of United States Navy veteran,
10 revered Louisiana academician, and tireless advocate for and the University of Louisiana at
11 Lafayette, Sammie Wayne Cospers PhD.

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to
13 Shirley Aguiard Cospers, widow of Sammie Wayne Cospers.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Mary Dozier O'Brien.

	DIGEST	
SR 12 Original	2018 Regular Session	Boudreaux
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