

2018 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 161

BY REPRESENTATIVES GLOVER, BAGLEY, JENKINS, NORTON, AND SEABAUGH

A RESOLUTION

To express the condolences of the House of Representatives upon the death of Mamie Bell Mayo Stewart Love Wallace.

WHEREAS, it is with deep regret and profound sorrow that the members of the Louisiana House of Representatives learned of the death of revered civil rights activist, Mamie Wallace, on April 21, 2018, at the age of ninety-six; and

WHEREAS, Mamie was the eleventh of twelve children born to Reverend Robert and Lula Stewart in the Calvary community near Benton, Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, Mamie graduated from Bossier Parish Training School in Benton and moved to Shreveport, where she worked as a cosmetologist; she and a friend and fellow civil rights activist opened and co-owned Modern Beauty Shop; and

WHEREAS, in Shreveport, Mamie joined the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and other organizations designed to fight for the rights of all; she worked vigorously to help fulfill the NAACP's mission; and

WHEREAS, Mamie Wallace met with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Dr. Ralph Abernathy in New Orleans in 1962; it was the beginning of a long-term friendship with Dr. King, whom she said she was "blessed to meet"; Ms. Wallace played a major role in bringing Dr. King to Shreveport that same year, where he galvanized crowds at Galilee Baptist Church to take a stand against racial injustice; and

WHEREAS, during that tumultuous time, Jim Crow laws dominated every aspect of African American life; as Ms. Wallace recalled, African Americans could not eat at most restaurants or try on clothing in stores; among other civil rights activities at that time of her

life, she picketed Stan's Record Shop in Shreveport, a business that enjoyed a significant black clientele but hired no black employees; and

WHEREAS, Mamie Wallace also aided the famous Freedom Riders, as they made their way through the Shreveport area, by supplying food and water at the downtown bus station, and following the 1963 church bombing in Birmingham, Alabama, Ms. Wallace participated in a march down Milam Street in protest of the atrocity; and

WHEREAS, Mamie Wallace reared three children, Anne Stewart, Natonya Cooper, and Gwendolyn Barnes; having no biological children of her own, Mamie served as a strong role model, mentor, and mother to the three children, and a grandmother to Gwen's children; and

WHEREAS, after President Barack Obama's historic election, Mamie Wallace was invited to attend his inauguration, a moment she described as "momentous"; she did not believe she would live to see the day the United States would have a black president; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Wallace was married to Clemmie Love for more than thirty years; after his death, she married Jack Wallace who died eight years later; and

WHEREAS, Mamie Wallace is survived by her sister, Hilyard Banks; children, Gwendolyn Barnes, and her husband Jimmy, Natonya Cherri Cooper, and Anne Stewart; grandchildren, Jimmy Barnes, Jr., and his wife Crystal, Jimmeka Batiste, and her husband Jeffrey, and Jimanique Barnes; great-grandchildren; and a host of nieces and nephews; and

WHEREAS, Mamie Wallace was an important leader in the most difficult days of the civil rights movement; she built a legacy as a wife, mother, community leader, and civil rights leader; and

WHEREAS, the death of Mamie Love Wallace has left a tremendous void in her community and has created a genuine sense of sorrow in the many individuals who mourn the loss of the kind nature and bright mind of this wonderful woman whose memory shall forever remain in their minds and hearts.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express sincere and heartfelt condolences upon the death of Mamie Bell Mayo Stewart Love Wallace, revered Shreveport civil rights activist, and does hereby extend posthumous honor and recognition to Mamie Wallace for her

incomparable legacy which is marked by the deep pride and honor that she will forever bring to her family and friends, her community, and to the state of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the family of Mamie Wallace.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES