

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 14

BY SENATOR MILKOVICH

A RESOLUTION

To express the sincere condolences of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the death of Norma Jernigan Blake, wife of Pastor Harry Blake, retired pastor of Mount Canaan Baptist Church in Shreveport, Louisiana.

WHEREAS, Norma Jernigan Blake was born to Claude and Nancy Gilliam Jernigan on January 22, 1938, in Bethany, Texas, and she died, surrounded by her family, in Shreveport on April 21, 2018, at the age of eighty, having suffered a massive stroke; and

WHEREAS, Norma Jernigan graduated from Booker T. Washington High School in Shreveport in 1957, and that is where she met Harry Blake, her eventual husband and the man that she adored every day from the moment they were married on August 31, 1958; and

WHEREAS, the Blakes were married for a joyous and rewarding fifty-nine years, a testament to the depth of their love and the totality of their commitment to each other that began on that August day in 1958; and

WHEREAS, Norma Blake and her pastor husband, Harry, were blessed with four children, two daughters, Elizabeth and Monica, and two sons, Harry and Rodney, and Mrs. Blake adored her children, their spouses, and her sixteen grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, while Pastor Harry Blake is widely known as an icon of the Civil Rights movement, Norma Blake took a less public role, which was not a passive role but one of support as a very important member of a two-person team that fought untiringly for justice and equality; and

WHEREAS, Norma Blake was known as the "First Lady" of Mount Canaan Baptist Church, and she was an active member of the congregation throughout her husband's fifty-two year tenure at the church; and

WHEREAS, Norma Blake was active at Mount Canaan beyond her role as wife of the pastor, organizing a children's summer reading program, etiquette workshops and training for teenage girls, and a women's ministry; and

WHEREAS, she served as a premarriage counselor to many couples at the church, and she was a speaker at various events at both Mount Canaan and other congregations; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Blake was a member of the Thirteenth District Missionary Baptist Association Women's Auxiliary and the Louisiana State Baptist Organization, and she was a certified personal care attendant; and

WHEREAS, Norma Blake was the recipient of the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated, "Woman of Distinction Award", and Mount Canaan established the "Norma Blake Living Legend Award" in Mrs. Blake's honor, which annually recognizes Christian women for their service; and

WHEREAS, Norma Jernigan Blake was dedicated to her faith, her husband and family, and her church family, all of whom she served faithfully and with great joy, blessing each with her Christian charity and love, making her life and the memory of her an example for all to follow and cherish.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express sincere condolences upon the death of Norma Jernigan Blake, wife of Pastor Harry Blake, retired pastor of Mount Canaan Baptist Church in Shreveport, Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Pastor Harry Blake, beloved husband of Norma Jernigan Blake.

---

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE