

2020 First Extraordinary Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 9

BY REPRESENTATIVES DAVIS, BAGLEY, BRASS, HILFERTY, JAMES, LACOMBE,
MAGEE, PIERRE, SCHEXNAYDER, STAGNI, AND TURNER AND
SENATORS FOIL, MCMATH, AND WARD

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To express sincere and heartfelt condolences upon the death of Samir Salman, accomplished
civil engineer and distinguished alumnus of Louisiana State University.

WHEREAS, Samir Shamoun Salman died peacefully at his home in Baton Rouge
surrounded by his loving wife and children on May 27, 2020, after a courageous and
characteristically tenacious battle with cancer; and

WHEREAS, Samir was born to the late Maria Aslan Salman and Shamoun Salman
on April 1, 1940, in Zahlé, Lebanon; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from secondary school in Damascus, Syria, Samir
worked for four years as a teacher of mathematics and logic and as a soccer coach in order
to save enough money to come to America in 1963 to study engineering at Louisiana State
University; and

WHEREAS, though Samir essentially spoke no English at all when he arrived in
Baton Rouge, with incredible determination, he graduated from LSU in 1966, having
completed in three years a bachelor of science in civil engineering degree program that
typically took at least five years for most students to finish; and

WHEREAS, Samir's distinguished career in engineering began at the agency that was
then known as the Louisiana Department of Highways, where he worked on the Atchafalaya
Basin Bridge project and gained experience in the design of major structures, structural
support systems, and bridge inspection procedures; and

WHEREAS, in 1973, Samir moved overseas to manage large-scale road and bridge
projects in the Middle East and Turkey; his exceptional talents and knowledge of languages,

laws, local customs, international construction codes, geography, and geology positioned him well to lead globally significant infrastructure projects, which he would do for the remainder of a long and productive career; and

WHEREAS, beginning in the mid-1970s, Samir led the design and construction of the first road to connect the Arabian Gulf by land to the Arabian Sea and also supervised the construction of numerous major structures in fast-growing urban areas of Saudi Arabia; and

WHEREAS, after coming out of a brief first retirement in 1988, Samir embarked on what was perhaps his greatest engineering achievement: building, over the course of twelve years, the first of the Trans-European Motorways, a dual three-lane highway through Turkey which links Europe to the Middle East; and

WHEREAS, a part of this road, the one hundred sixty mile long Tarsus-Adana-Gaziantep Motorway in southeastern Turkey, built through an active seismic zone and featuring eleven concrete and steel viaducts, one of which is forty-five stories high and the third-tallest in Europe, is regarded as a marvel of modern civil engineering; and

WHEREAS, while working in Baton Rouge before he embarked on his international career, Samir met and married the love of his life, Rita Mae Pizzolatto, a dental hygienist and Loyola University New Orleans graduate originally of Houma; and

WHEREAS, Rita and Samir would both recall fondly the days of their courtship when he introduced her to traditional Lebanese cuisine, which he prepared himself as foods such as yogurt and hummus were not yet common here, and brought her to see Louisiana's first high-mast road lighting, which he had built, on Airline Highway; and

WHEREAS, Rita and Samir were married on February 24, 1973, at Christ the King Catholic Church on the LSU campus and they later welcomed into the world a daughter, Samira Anne, and a son, Sammer Joseph; and

WHEREAS, the couple raised their children both in Baton Rouge and abroad, living for periods in Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey, with shorter stints in Syria and the United Kingdom, the children attending school for a time in Switzerland, and they enjoyed the wonders and navigated the challenges of making the world their home; and

WHEREAS, Samir did not live only to work; he loved to dance and to *khafila* often with friends and family; and

WHEREAS, he and Rita hosted countless gatherings of family and good friends and they delighted in treating people to good times and wonderful food, serving homemade Lebanese fare and classic Louisiana Italian dishes in abundance and with love; and

WHEREAS, Samir finally retired in the early 2000s, settled permanently with Rita in Baton Rouge, and treasured time with his children, whom he loved fiercely, as they each finished their education at LSU and went on to careers in Texas and New York City; and

WHEREAS, among his greatest pleasures in his later years were doting on his two beautiful grandchildren, seeing his family find happiness and success, and, as a man who had come to love American football and also lived in the Tiger Stadium dormitory long ago, relishing the LSU football team's amazing performances and national championships; and

WHEREAS, left to cherish his memory are his loved ones in the United States, Turkey, Syria, Sweden, and the Netherlands: his devoted wife of forty-seven years, Rita Pizzolatto Salman; his daughter, son, and daughter-in-law, Samira, Sammer, and Brooke Dickerson Salman; grandson and granddaughter, Felix and Clara Salman; brother, Elie Salman; sisters, Maha Salman Aras, Huda Salman Saliba, and Muna Salman Gabriel; numerous in-laws, nieces, nephews, and other beloved members of his extended family; and a host of close friends around the world including many engineering colleagues.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express sincere and heartfelt condolences upon the death of Samir Salman; does hereby recognize his many accomplishments; and does hereby record his singular contributions and achievements, which will forever be a source of pride and honor for his family.

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

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE