

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 246

BY SENATORS BARROW, BERNARD, BOUDREAUX, BOUIE, FIELDS, JACKSON,
JOHNS, LUNEAU, FRED MILLS, PETERSON, PRICE, SMITH AND
TARVER

A RESOLUTION

To express the sincere condolences of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the death of Martha White, a key participant in the 1953 Baton Rouge bus boycott.

WHEREAS, it is with deep regret and profound sorrow that the citizens of Louisiana learned of the death of Martha White on Saturday, June 5, 2021, at the age of ninety-nine; and

WHEREAS, despite the fact that Martha White was known for being outspoken and unafraid to share her opinion, the transformative moment of her life involved a simple gesture: she took a seat in the empty white section of a public bus, full of standing black passengers, because she was tired; and

WHEREAS, that action by a tired twenty-three-year-old housekeeper, who walked miles in sweltering heat to reach her bus stop, stood on the bus going to and from work, and worked on her feet all day, served as a spark for the 1953 Baton Rouge bus boycott; and

WHEREAS, the 1953 Baton Rouge bus boycott became one of the nation's first public transportation boycotts of the Civil Rights Movement and later served as the framework for the famous Montgomery bus boycott led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.; and

WHEREAS, Martha White's bold action was a stepping-stone on the path toward a significant evolution of nonviolent civil rights protests in Baton Rouge and United States history; and

WHEREAS, when asked about her actions on that day, Martha White responded "I knew that what I did was for the good of everyone in Baton Rouge"; and

WHEREAS, this sentiment is echoed by many, and according to Baton Rouge's Mayor Sharon Weston Broome, "Martha White undoubtedly shaped our community in Baton Rouge and communities across our nation"; and

WHEREAS, with the death of Martha White, Louisiana has lost one of her finest daughters, a civil rights advocate, and a historian – a citizen who loved her community and whose accomplishments have left an indelible mark upon her city, state, and nation.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby extend sincere and heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of Martha White upon her passing and does hereby offer prayers and hopes for peace and comfort for those who mourn as we honor her civil rights legacy.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE