

2022 Regular Session

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 43

BY SENATOR FIELDS

CONDOLENCES. Expresses sincere and heartfelt condolences upon the death of Mr. Johnnie Jones Sr.

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 To express the sincere condolences of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the passing of
3 Johnnie A. Jones Sr. and to gratefully acknowledge his extraordinary career of public
4 service on behalf of the citizens of Louisiana.

5 WHEREAS, Johnnie A. Jones Sr. was a uniquely talented civil rights lawyer and
6 decorated veteran who provided many decades of public service to his beloved Louisiana;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, his storied legacy began in Laurel Hill, Louisiana, where Johnnie A.
9 Jones was born November 30, 1919, to a family of local farmers on Rosemound Plantation,
10 and though his parents stressed the importance of education, they also instilled in him the
11 value of hard work; and

12 WHEREAS, Johnnie worked hard to earn the \$17.50 tuition to attend high school at
13 Southern University Demonstration School, which was later named Southern University Lab
14 School, and after graduating, he went on to major in industrial education at Southern
15 University, and in 1942, he was drafted by the United States Army where he became the
16 Army's first African-American warrant officer assigned to a unit responsible for unloading
17 equipment and supplies onto the Normandy beaches in France; and

18 WHEREAS, during the June 6, 1944, invasion as Jones came ashore on Omaha

1 Beach, he came under fire from a German sniper, he grabbed his weapon, returned fire, and
2 this became a memory that haunted him all his life; he continued to exhibit bravery as he
3 served his country; thereafter, a ship that he was stationed on hit a mine and Johnnie was
4 blown from the second deck to the first deck; it was during this attack he was hit with
5 shrapnel and badly injured; and

6 WHEREAS, by the end of World War II, more than a million African Americans
7 were in uniform including the famed Tuskegee Airmen and the 761st Tank Battalion, but
8 these heroes returned from the war only to encounter discrimination in their home country;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, these events served as a call to action to fight racism in which Johnnie
11 obtained a law degree from Southern University Law School, was recruited in 1953 to be the
12 spokesperson for the NAACP, and helped organize a bus boycott in Baton Rouge and defend
13 the participants; an event used by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as the basis for a
14 larger bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, several years later; and

15 WHEREAS, in his law practice Jones provided legal aid to students arrested during
16 sit-ins; defended the Southern University students who staged the lunch counter protest at
17 the Kress department store in downtown Baton Rouge, and he helped desegregate the
18 courthouse; and

19 WHEREAS, in his quest to obtain equality for African Americans in the United
20 States, Jones' vehicle was bombed twice, but he persevered and was an active participant in
21 the social justice movement that would widely impact future generations; and

22 WHEREAS, Jones' many accolades include the Sign Post To Freedom award from
23 the Odell S. Williams Museum/Sadie Roberts Joseph; a special recognition from Governor
24 John Bel Edwards; SAVE BR Youth Prayer Movement; Taking A Seat For Justice-Award
25 of Excellence; Southern University National Lawyers Guild, Pillar Award; Chairman Award,
26 Civil Rights Icon, Louisiana Legislative Black Caucus Foundation; Louis A. Martinet
27 Society, Lifetime Achievement; the Louisiana Black History Hall of Fame; and Baton Rouge
28 Chapter of The Links, Louisiana Role Model; and

29 WHEREAS, in 2020, the French government presented Johnnie A. Jones Sr. with the
30 Legion of Honor award for his World War II service and though it took decades for Jones'

1 sacrifice and courage during World War II to be recognized, in 2021 at the age of one
2 hundred one, he finally received his Purple Heart, which is awarded to U.S. service members
3 killed or wounded in action; and

4 WHEREAS, Johnnie A. Jones Sr. was a man who lived an exceptional life and the
5 value of his service to his country and to his state cannot be measured.

6 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
7 express sincere and heartfelt condolences to the family of Johnnie A. Jones Sr. and does
8 gratefully acknowledge his extraordinary career of miliary service and dedication to civil
9 rights.

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
11 family of Johnnie A. Jones Sr.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Dawn Romero Watson.

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