

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 86

BY SENATOR FIELDS

A RESOLUTION

To designate May 15, 2023, as "Southern University Day" at the Louisiana State Capitol and hereby recognize Southern University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, for its exceptional capacity to inspire students with an unmatched sense of pride to unleash their full potential; accomplishing this through a wide range of prolific courses, programs, and services that sustain students beyond graduation while providing new socioeconomic opportunities within an international network.

WHEREAS, since its inception in 1880 in New Orleans, Louisiana, Southern University has flourished, expanded, and empowered every student and faculty member to exceed their own potential; and

WHEREAS, the origins of Southern University can be traced back to a collective of Black politicians led by P.B.S. Pinchback, the first black Governor of Louisiana, who petitioned the state constitutional convention, advocating for the establishment of a higher education institution specifically for citizens of color; and

WHEREAS, Southern University combines academic rigor with practical experience and embraces a holistic approach to living and learning to foster the development of well-rounded individuals, ensuring that each student discovers their passion and purpose; and

WHEREAS, with the enactment of Act 87 of 1880, Southern University was established as an educational institution for community learners, commencing its journey by providing academic studies to a modest student body of fewer than two hundred, supported by a committed faculty of less than twenty, on a seventeen-acre site located within the historically significant Pontchartrain Park in eastern New Orleans, Louisiana.; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Second Morrill Act of 1890, Southern University transformed into a landgrant institution with the establishment of a department of agriculture and mechanics, supported by both state and federal governments; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Act 188 of 1912, Southern University relocated from New Orleans to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and under the guidance of Dr. J.S. Clark, expanded its academic offerings to include baccalaureate degrees, while also establishing schools for the blind and deaf during the 1920s; and

WHEREAS, following the tenure of Dr. J.S. Clark, Dr. Felton G. Clark assumed the presidency in 1938, leading Southern University through a period of growth, prosperity, and increased prestige, expanding the university curriculum into eight divisions and establishing a law school by 1947; and

WHEREAS, business and engineering curricula were incorporated into Southern University's curriculum, alongside the establishment of a graduate school, resulting in significant growth by the 1960s that necessitated further reorganization under the leadership of Dr. G. Leon Netterville; and

WHEREAS, in 1974, the Southern University system was structured under a unified leadership with the establishment of a board of supervisors tasked with providing guidance to the system and its distinct campuses; and

WHEREAS, during the 1980s and 1990s, Southern University experienced exceptional growth by continuously improving its mission to provide quality instruction, which resulted in the establishment of a nursing school, the Southern University Agricultural Research Center, and significant expansion of graduate programs to all students regardless of background; and

WHEREAS, Southern University, which began with just twelve students, five faculty members, a ten thousand dollar budget, and a forward-thinking vision, has developed into a prestigious academic institution that is recognized as a national treasure, consisting of five Louisiana campuses: Southern University and A&M College in Baton Rouge, Southern University in New Orleans, Southern University Shreveport, Southern University Law Center in Baton Rouge, and Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Baton Rouge, now featuring over eight hundred faculty members, a budget of more

than one hundred eighty million dollars, and an extensive range of associate, bachelor's, master's, juris doctorate, and doctoral degree programs; and

WHEREAS, for individuals aspiring to make a meaningful impact on both life and society, Southern University offers a wide array of courses that delve into the complexities of human behavior, social dynamics, and global issues, providing students with essential critical thinking skills necessary to address the intricate challenges of the modern world; and

WHEREAS, at Southern University, students are provided with opportunities to engage in hands-on experimentation and groundbreaking research within state-of-the-art laboratories equipped with cutting-edge equipment, all under the guidance and support of a distinguished faculty and administrators who are leaders in their respective fields, serving as a source of inspiration for students as they strive to push the boundaries of knowledge; and

WHEREAS, Southern University offers a diverse range of programs spanning from fine arts to finance and literature to law, providing students with opportunities to delve into the intricacies of society, social sciences, and fostering a profound appreciation for the depth and richness of the human experience; and

WHEREAS, the entrepreneurial spirit at Southern University is nurtured through the provision of mentorship programs, business incubators, and networking opportunities, fostering innovation and enterprise; and

WHEREAS, the dynamic campuses of Southern University offer abundant options for students to actively participate in extracurricular activities and join diverse interest-based clubs, thereby promoting personal growth and fostering lasting friendships that extend well beyond graduation; and

WHEREAS, Southern University takes great pride in being the esteemed home of the Southern Jaguars sports programs and fan zone, where athletics flourish as deeply rewarding and fulfilling pursuits, adhering to procedures and credentials, all fueled by unwavering support from the entire university student body and alumni community; and

WHEREAS, the renowned Southern University Band, affectionately known as The Human Jukebox, along with the Fabulous Dancing Dolls have revolutionized the conventional standards of college bands, accumulating numerous accolades, captivating

parade performances, notable appearances in movies and music videos, and garnering widespread online acclaim, as exemplified in the 2019 Netflix documentary, *Homecoming*; and

WHEREAS, Southern University's dedication to inclusivity and diversity is steadfast, as it advocates for students from all backgrounds and fosters an environment where diverse perspectives flourish; and

WHEREAS, under the guided leadership of Dennis J. Shields, the Southern University System and Southern University A&M College continue their longstanding commitment to providing quality education and cultivating capable individuals to become respected leaders, emphasizing active engagement with all stakeholders, investment in the institution's personnel, and a dedication to transparency and accountability.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby designate May 15, 2023, as Southern University Day at the Senate at the Louisiana State Capitol.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby recognize the exceptional capacity of the Southern University System and the Southern University Agricultural and Mechanical College for its exceptional aptitude in motivating and instilling a strong sense of pride in students, empowering them to unleash their full potential, achieved through a diverse range of influential courses, programs, and services that not only provide support to students beyond graduation but also open up new socioeconomic opportunities within an international network.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Dennis J. Shields, the president of the Southern University System and chancellor of the Southern University and A&M College.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE