

2023 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 126

BY SENATOR CORTEZ

COMMENDATIONS. Commends the Honorable Fred H. Mills Jr. on twenty-three years of distinguished public service.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To commend the Honorable Fred H. Mills Jr. on twenty-three years of distinguished public  
3 service to the state of Louisiana and to express heartfelt gratitude for the kindness,  
4 compassion, intellect, humor, and statesmanship he brought to the Louisiana State  
5 Capitol.

6 WHEREAS, Fred H. Mills Jr. was born and raised in Breaux Bridge, Louisiana, into  
7 a family deeply rooted in faith, hard work, and public service; and

8 WHEREAS, his father, Fred H. Mills Sr., was the mayor of Breaux Bridge for most  
9 of the 1970s and was regarded by everyone as a man of great respectability; and

10 WHEREAS, Fred H. Mills Sr. was an exemplary role model for his son on how to  
11 use the great privilege of being a public servant to treat people with respect and kindness to  
12 achieve a benefit for all; and

13 WHEREAS, Senator Mills is considered the flesh-and-blood replica of his  
14 immensely respected late father and is a perfect reflection of the character and integrity  
15 imparted upon him by his late mother, Mary Alice Mills, who instilled in her son the  
16 importance of responsibility, hard work, prayerfulness, and thankfulness; and

17 WHEREAS, Senator Mills graduated from Breaux Bridge High School and the  
18 University of Louisiana at Monroe, College of Pharmacy, and in 1981, at the young age of

1 twenty-six, opened his own pharmacy, Mills Cashway Pharmacy in Parks, Louisiana; and

2 WHEREAS, as a licensed pharmacist he was a pioneer in the development of  
3 pharmaceutical delivery and grew his small community pharmacy throughout all of rural St.  
4 Martin Parish long before the internet or home delivery of any commodity was considered  
5 mainstream; and

6 WHEREAS, his hilarious commercials for Mills Cashway Pharmacy garnered him  
7 several national awards for creative advertising, but his intention was greater than just  
8 making people laugh, it was to draw people into the pharmacy so he could help them  
9 properly take their medications, manage their chronic conditions, and help improve the  
10 quality of life of the people in his community; and

11 WHEREAS, he also served as the executive director for the Louisiana Board of  
12 Pharmacy, and during his tenure he was responsible for the complete rewrite and  
13 modernization of the Pharmacy Practice Act to better utilize the skills and expertise of the  
14 pharmacist in the patient continuum of care; and

15 WHEREAS, during the devastating aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Senator  
16 Mills was tapped by Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco to be the state lead on the  
17 monumental task of managing the Strategic National Stockpile federal repository of  
18 antibiotics, vaccines, chemical antidotes, antitoxins, and other critical medical supplies being  
19 brought into the state; overseeing a process to reunite patients, many of whom were  
20 dispersed throughout the United States, with critical medications and supplies that were lost  
21 following the catastrophic destruction of pharmacies and pharmacy records at a time before  
22 access to electronic patient records was common; and rallying the pharmacy community to  
23 continue to provide medications without payment for many months until he was able to wear  
24 down the bureaucrats at the Federal Emergency Management Agency to finally issue  
25 reimbursement; and

26 WHEREAS, in addition to being a pharmacist, Senator Mills has been on the Board  
27 of Directors of Farmers Merchants Bank and Trust and has served as the president and CEO  
28 of the bank for the past twenty-two years; and

29 WHEREAS, during his tenure as president and CEO, he significantly grew bank  
30 assets, expanded to six branches in three parishes, managed over one hundred employees,

1 bolstered the commercial book of business significantly, and led the bank through major  
2 technological advancements, and still today, he continues to guide his employees through  
3 the rapidly changing style of banking demanded by consumers; and

4 WHEREAS, Senator Mills began his political career in 2000, being elected to the St.  
5 Martin Parish Council, where he served until 2007; and

6 WHEREAS, as a councilman he not only used his expertise in the realm of health  
7 care and banking to better serve his community, but was immediately indoctrinated into the  
8 daily struggles of people regarding roads, bridges, sewer, water, drainage, flooding, schools,  
9 taxes, and so many other issues that would shape his entire political career; and

10 WHEREAS, in 2007, he was elected to represent the people of Louisiana House of  
11 Representatives District No. 46, and was immediately recognized for his captivating ability  
12 as a freshman legislator to tackle hard issues head-on while remaining respectful of both  
13 sides of the debate; and

14 WHEREAS, in 2011, he was elected to represent the people of Iberia, Lafayette, St.  
15 Landry, and St. Martin parishes when the seat for Louisiana Senate District No. 22 was  
16 vacated and quickly established himself as an exceptional resource on the Senate Committee  
17 on Health and Welfare and the Senate Committee on Finance; and

18 WHEREAS, he was reelected without opposition in 2015 and was appointed by  
19 Senate President John Alario to serve as the chairman of the Senate Committee on Health  
20 and Welfare during the 2016 to 2020 term, overseeing the physical, behavioral, and social  
21 healthcare policy and legislative directives governing the residents of Louisiana; and

22 WHEREAS, Senator Mills was reelected again without opposition in 2019, and in  
23 January 2020, Senate President Patrick "Page" Cortez reappointed him to continue serving  
24 as chairman of the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare and also appointed him as  
25 Senate Parliamentarian; and

26 WHEREAS, in addition to serving at one time on nearly every Senate standing  
27 committee, Senator Mills has served on numerous public and private boards and  
28 commissions including the Acadian Ambulance Board of Directors for over fifteen years,  
29 the St. Martin Economic Development Authority (SMEDA) for over thirty years as a  
30 founding member and current president and CEO, and the Board of Directors for the St.

1 Martin Parish Hospital Service District for over forty years; and

2 WHEREAS, during his tenure as a state legislator he has authored significant  
3 legislation impacting the areas of health care, human service districts, safe drinking water,  
4 local sewerage systems, behavioral health care, access to physical therapy, medical  
5 marijuana, pharmacy benefit managers, Medicaid managed care, taxation, professional and  
6 occupational health licensing boards, and the opioid crisis, to name just a few; and

7 WHEREAS, during his time as a state legislator, he helped the residents of this state  
8 recover not only from the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, but also from many other  
9 hurricanes, floods, and natural and manmade disasters to have befallen this state; and

10 WHEREAS, despite the optimism of the new term and new decade that was starting  
11 in 2020, Senator Mills, like the rest of the world, was thrown into the global COVID-19  
12 pandemic; and

13 WHEREAS, he worked tirelessly to help the people of his district and this state  
14 access state and federal resources available to cope with the abrupt and unprecedented  
15 disruption of life as it was known prior to March 2020; and

16 WHEREAS, in addition to the turmoil COVID-19 caused at his pharmacy and bank  
17 that demanded his attention, he never hesitated to tap every resource available to help his  
18 constituents in need, much like he always has based on the example set by his father; and

19 WHEREAS, Senator Mills has always approached his responsibility as a public  
20 servant in a way that exemplifies the goodness of government and all that can be  
21 accomplished to help people, as opposed to the volatility of politics, which if left unchecked  
22 can be hurtful and divisive; and

23 WHEREAS, he has always been a man of the people committed to the people,  
24 treating everyone who approached him as a friend with the same respect no matter how big  
25 or small their voices were; and

26 WHEREAS, his legislative assistant, Ms. Yvette Greig, has been his trusted assistant  
27 and voice of compassion since he was first elected to public office in 2000; and

28 WHEREAS, he often uses humor to diffuse tense situations in meetings or committee  
29 hearings, but he has never disregarded or minimized the positions of people who meet with  
30 him or testify before his committee; and

1           WHEREAS, Senator Mills is the most humble of politicians, a true gentleman and  
2 statesman, who has set the bar extremely high for those who follow in his footsteps; and

3           WHEREAS, his wisdom, decorum, and ability to be a steadfast legislative leader will  
4 be sorely missed by every legislator who has had the honor of serving with him, by all of the  
5 staff who have had the privilege of working with him, by all of the lobbyists who have been  
6 able to rely on him, by the residents of this state who have benefitted from his heroic efforts  
7 on their behalf, and most importantly, by the people of Senate District 22 who have had the  
8 most loyal of champions fighting on their behalf; and

9           WHEREAS, although Senator Mills has reached the end of his final term in the  
10 Louisiana Legislature, there is no doubt that whatever lies ahead for him in the next chapter  
11 of his life he will continue to be profoundly impactful on those around him because that is  
12 simply the kind of man that he is, and always will be, even without a political title to his  
13 name.

14           THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana  
15 does hereby commend and congratulate the Honorable Fred H. Mills Jr. on twenty-three  
16 years of distinguished public service to the state of Louisiana.

17           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does  
18 hereby express heartfelt gratitude to Senator Mills for setting a standard of character and  
19 integrity founded on kindness, compassion, intellect, humor, and statesmanship that  
20 everyone who walks the halls of this great capitol should emulate.

21           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does  
22 hereby extend to Senator Mills the most sincere wishes for many years of success and  
23 happiness in all of his future endeavors.

24           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the  
25 Honorable Fred H. Mills Jr.

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The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part  
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Christine Arbo Peck.

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