

2025 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 129

BY SENATOR BOUDREAUX

CONDOLENCES. To express sincere and heartfelt condolences to the family and former students and players of James W. Simmons Jr. on the occasion of his passing.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To express the sincere and heartfelt condolences of the Senate of the Legislature of  
3 Louisiana upon the passing of James W. Simmons Jr., a beloved coach, athletic  
4 director, educator, and mentor who dedicated more than five decades to influencing  
5 high school athletics and shaping young lives throughout the Acadiana region and  
6 beyond.

7 WHEREAS, it is with deep regret and reverence that the Senate of the Legislature  
8 of Louisiana learned of the passing of James W. Simmons Jr., on Sunday, May 11, 2025, at  
9 the age of seventy-seven; and

10 WHEREAS, born on October 27, 1947, in Abbeville, Louisiana, to Reverend James  
11 W. Simmons Sr. and Wanda Armstrong Simmons, James Simmons was a devoted family  
12 man, veteran, educator, coach, and public servant who committed his life to the service of  
13 others; and

14 WHEREAS, James graduated from Jonas Henderson High School in New Iberia,  
15 where he excelled as a student-athlete, participating in baseball, football, and track, and  
16 displaying an early passion for sports and statistics that foreshadowed his legendary career;  
17 and

18 WHEREAS, he pursued higher education at Southern University, where he met the

1 love of his life, Mary Evelyn, with whom he shared a joyful union and raised one cherished  
2 daughter, Jamie; and

3 WHEREAS, James proudly served in the Army National Guard and, following his  
4 honorable discharge, began a lifelong commitment to youth development and athletics, first  
5 as a teacher and coach at Crowley High School in 1970, and later at Acadiana High School  
6 beginning in 1983; and

7 WHEREAS, known simply and fondly by generations as "Coach Simmons", he made  
8 a lasting impact through his leadership in football, basketball, and especially track and field,  
9 where his passion and excellence earned him district, regional, and state titles and wide  
10 respect among peers and students alike; and

11 WHEREAS, in 1990, James Simmons made history as the first Black Athletic  
12 Director of Lafayette Parish School System, a role he held with great distinction for  
13 twenty-three years, expanding access and resources for all sports and championing equity  
14 and integrity in student athletics; and

15 WHEREAS, Coach Simmons was renowned not only for his technical knowledge  
16 and leadership, but also for his unwavering professionalism, mentorship, and ability to  
17 inspire both students and fellow coaches, as well as for always doing things "the right way";  
18 and

19 WHEREAS, following his retirement from the school system in 2013, he remained  
20 active in athletics, serving as a Louisiana High School Athletic Association auditor,  
21 officiating track meets at the state and national levels, and continuing to guide and support  
22 student-athletes and programs across Louisiana; and

23 WHEREAS, he pioneered essential reforms, including the introduction of qualified  
24 trainers in Lafayette Parish schools and improved collaboration between local recreation  
25 departments and school systems, advancing both safety and participation in youth sports; and

26 WHEREAS, Coach Simmons' lifetime of commitment and excellence was formally  
27 recognized through his inductions into the Louisiana High School Sports Hall of Fame in  
28 2012 and the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) Hall  
29 of Fame in 2015; and

30 WHEREAS, his national leadership included service on the NIAAA Board of

1 Directors, NIAAA Strategic Planning Committee, National High School Hall of Fame  
2 Steering Committee, and AAU Infraction Committee, where he helped shape policy and  
3 uphold standards of excellence in interscholastic athletics; and

4 WHEREAS, those who knew James Simmons -including friends, colleagues, and  
5 countless student-athletes - remember him not only as a coach but as a role model, father  
6 figure, man of faith, and symbol of integrity who left an indelible mark on every community  
7 he touched; and

8 WHEREAS, Coach Simmons' legacy lives on in the generations of young people  
9 whose lives he transformed through encouragement, accountability, and love, and his  
10 example continues to inspire those who strive to lead with purpose and serve with honor.

11 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana  
12 does hereby express its profound sorrow upon the passing of James W. Simmons Jr., does  
13 hereby recognize and celebrate his lifetime of service to youth, athletics, and education; and  
14 does hereby offer its deepest condolences to his family, former students and athletes, and the  
15 entire Acadiana community who mourn his loss.

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to his  
17 daughter Jamie M. Simmons.

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The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Senate Legislative Services. The keyword, summary, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

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DIGEST

SR 129 Original                      2025 Regular Session                      Boudreaux

Expresses condolences upon the passing of James W. Simmons Jr.