

1 produce in people's lives and the community; and

2 WHEREAS, Dr. Norman Francis became a distinguished higher education leader,
3 civil rights advocate, and business leader who played a key role in New Orleans' civic,
4 culture, and economic institutions; and

5 WHEREAS, on April 4, 1968, Dr. Francis assumed the presidency of Xavier
6 University of Louisiana, the same day of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination, which
7 played a key role in Xavier's decision to house the Freedom Riders in a campus dormitory;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, Dr. Francis was the first lay, male, and African-American president of
10 the university and the second African-American to ever serve as president of a Catholic
11 university in the United States; and

12 WHEREAS, under his leadership, Xavier University grew in both size and
13 dimension; it has more than tripled its enrollment, broadened its curriculum with pharmacy
14 training, and expanded the campus, thus dramatically expanding its national reputation,
15 particularly in the sciences and health professions; and

16 WHEREAS, through his service as president from 1968 to 2015, for forty-seven
17 years, he reshaped not only Xavier, but the city of New Orleans, and the nation it serves.
18 Xavier University is recognized as a leading producer of black graduates who go on to earn
19 medical and science degrees; a legacy directly tied to Dr. Francis' belief that education must
20 serve both opportunity and justice to help individuals and the community flourish; and

21 WHEREAS, Dr. Francis served as a confidant to key members of New Orleans'
22 political families: the Landrieus and the Morials, and advised eight U.S. presidents on issues
23 of education and civil rights which earned him dozens of honorary degrees and, in 2006, the
24 Presidential Medal of Freedom from President George W. Bush; and

25 WHEREAS, as a trusted civic leader who's impact extended far beyond campus,
26 following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Dr. Francis played a pivotal role as the chairman of
27 the Louisiana Recovery Authority, demonstrating the state's faith in his exceptional
28 commitment to his community and its overall advancement as he took charge of planning
29 the recovery and rebuilding of Louisiana; and

30 WHEREAS, as a business leader, in 1972 he co-founded Liberty Bank and Trust

1 Company to provide financial services to underserved black communities; Liberty Bank is
2 one of the oldest and largest black owned banks in the United States, and he was an early
3 investor in bringing the New Orleans Saints to the city and the development of the Mercedes
4 Benz Superdome; and

5 WHEREAS, nationally, Dr. Francis was hailed as a towering figure in philanthropy
6 and education, serving as chair of the United Negro College Fund and holding leadership
7 roles on numerous corporate, foundation, and nonprofit boards; and

8 WHEREAS, his family in a statement to Verite News stated, "His legacy lives on not
9 only through his accomplishments and leadership, but through the countless lives he
10 inspired, the students and communities he uplifted, the public officials he advised, and
11 values he passed on to us. We will remember his gentle strength, his unwavering integrity,
12 and his deep passion for equity."; and

13 WHEREAS, he is survived by six children: Michael, Tim, David, Kathleen, Patrick
14 and Christina, along with eleven grandchildren, and a host of other family members and
15 friends; and

16 WHEREAS, he was preceded in death by his loving and devoted wife of sixty years,
17 Blanche Francis; and

18 WHEREAS, it has been said that the measure of a man is based upon how he lived,
19 his generosity of spirit, and his capacity to love, and by these and other measures, Dr.
20 Norman C. Francis indeed stood tall and will be long-remembered.

21 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
22 extend sincere and heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of Dr. Norman C. Francis,
23 upon his passing and does hereby offer prayers and hopes for peace and comfort for those
24 who mourn as we honor his legacy.

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
26 family of Dr. Norman C. Francis.

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)]

SCR 10 Original	DIGEST 2026 Regular Session	Duplessis
-----------------	--------------------------------	-----------

Expresses condolences upon the death of Dr. Norman Christopher Francis.