

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 64

BY REPRESENTATIVE WALTERS

A RESOLUTION

To commemorate the legacy of Shreveport native Johnnie Cochran, Jr.

WHEREAS, it is with immense pride that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana recognizes Johnnie Cochran, Jr., for his achievements as a litigator and civil libertarian and commemorates the legacy of his work; and

WHEREAS, Johnnie L. Cochran, Jr., was born on October 2, 1937, in Shreveport, Louisiana, to Johnnie Cochran, Sr., and Hattie B. Cochran; he grew up with two sisters, Pearl and Martha Jean, during a period when Louisiana was reeling from the effects of the Great Depression and remained deeply entrenched in Jim Crow laws; and

WHEREAS, Johnnie moved to California with his family at the age of six; the family eventually settled in Los Angeles, and he lived there for the remainder of his life; he attended Los Angeles High School, where he was a member of the honor society; and

WHEREAS, Thurgood Marshall inspired a sixteen-year-old Johnnie to study law by successfully arguing that the "separate but equal" doctrine was unconstitutional during the historic 1954 case, *Brown v. Board of Education*; and

WHEREAS, Johnnie attended the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) and graduated in 1959; he enrolled at Loyola Law School and soon became the first African American law clerk in the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office; his superiors noticed his fascination with trial work and assigned him to represent the city in small claims court; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cochran graduated from Loyola Law School on June 1, 1962, and began preparation for the California Bar Exam; after learning that he passed the exam, he returned to the city attorney's office as a deputy attorney; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cochran began his work as an attorney on January 10, 1963, and by 1965, he was regarded as one of the city attorney's top trial lawyers; he left the city attorney's office in March 1965 and began a private practice with Gerald D. Lenoir; soon after, he represented numerous clients who were involved in the Watts Riots and renewed his commitment to effect change in the criminal and civil justice systems; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cochran started his own practice with a goal to remedy the disconnect between the community and local government by working within the legal system; while continuing his criminal defense work, he began handling an increasing number of civil cases; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cochran was appointed to represent Willie Stafford, a member of the Black Panther Party, following a December 1969 shootout between the party, the FBI, and the LAPD's Criminal Conspiracy Division; in December 1971, he made his closing arguments in defense of Stafford and the other party members on trial; he secured not guilty verdicts for the majority of the seventy-two charges alleged against his clients; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cochran worked tirelessly to overturn Geronimo Pratt's wrongful murder conviction; Mr. Pratt was a Black Panther Party leader and decorated veteran of the Vietnam War who received two Bronze Stars, a Silver Star, and two Purple Hearts for his service; his conviction was vacated on June 10, 1997, after twenty-seven years; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cochran was known as the go-to attorney for many celebrities in the 1990s; his clients included Tupac Shakur, Snoop Dogg, Sean Combs, Michael Jackson, Jim Brown, and Riddick Bowe; he is most famously remembered as one of O.J. Simpson's defense attorneys during the internationally televised trial; and

WHEREAS, Johnnie Cochran, Jr., was a dedicated servant of the people who established himself as one of the best trial attorneys in American history, and it is most fitting to honor his historic legacy.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commemorate the legacy of Shreveport native Johnnie Cochran, Jr., and does hereby express enduring appreciation for his historic work as a trial lawyer and civil libertarian.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES