

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 55

BY SENATOR BOUDREAUX

A RESOLUTION

To express the sincere and heartfelt condolences of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the passing of Joseph M. Cotton Sr.

WHEREAS, Joseph M. Cotton Sr., was born on March 25, 1941, in Alexandria, Louisiana, to Sylvester G. Cotton Sr. and Delores Tassin Cotton; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cotton passed away on Saturday, August 2, 2025, at the age of eighty-four, lovingly surrounded by his devoted family. A product of strong faith and family values, he committed his life to service, scholarship, and the upliftment of others; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cotton was a lifelong educator and advocate for personal and academic development. He was a proud graduate of St. James Catholic Elementary and High School and Grambling State University, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Secondary Education, followed by a master's degree in guidance and psychology from the University of Southwestern Louisiana (now University of Louisiana at Lafayette), and pursued doctoral studies in developmental education and student personnel. He was also a Licensed Professional Counselor and held an Educational Specialist Certification in Administration and Supervision; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cotton's professional career spanned more than five decades, impacting generations of students, families, and professionals across Louisiana and the nation. Over his distinguished career, he served as a teacher and counselor in the St. Martinville Parish school system, a college instructor, and a respected administrator with the Louisiana Department of Education. From 1990 to his retirement, he served at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, most notably as Project Director for the Dr. Ronald E. McNair Research Scholars Program, where he mentored and inspired countless first-generation and underrepresented college students to pursue graduate studies; and

WHEREAS, his work extended beyond the classroom, as a nationally respected speaker, consultant, and trainer in the areas of student development, prevention education, and counseling. His work reached beyond Louisiana to national organizations, such as the

U.S. Department of Education, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD), Boys & Girls Clubs of America, and numerous local and national youth and prevention programs; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cotton's life was marked by numerous accolades and honors, including inclusion in the book, "Who's Who in the South and Southwest", Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. "Man of the Year", the Kiwanis Club Southwest "Outstanding Citizen of the Year", and multiple awards from educational and counseling associations, reflecting a life of integrity, impact, and excellence; and

WHEREAS, he faithfully served his community and his church, Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church, in various leadership and service roles including lector, parish council member, and master of ceremonies for numerous church and community events; and

WHEREAS, a faithful member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church, Mr. Cotton served in numerous ministries and community events. He was also a proud, lifelong member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., initiated in 1960, and served as a past president of the Eta Gamma Lambda Chapter, where he furthered educational and civic engagement and exemplified the fraternity's aims of manly deeds, scholarship, and love for all mankind throughout his life; and

WHEREAS, he was a loving and devoted husband, father, grandfather, brother, and friend whose legacy lives on in the hearts of those he touched. He is survived by his cherished partner in life and wife of sixty years, Virgie M. Syrie Cotton; his children, Cheryl L. Cotton and Andre' Jamal Cotton; his grandchildren, Dr. Shelby A. Perkins and Jordan Miles Cotton; his siblings, Delores C. Mack and Earl Lee Cotton Sr.; and many beloved in-laws, nieces, nephews, relatives, and friends who mourn his passing; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cotton was preceded in death by his beloved son, Joseph Miles "Joey" Cotton II, his parents, and several siblings and in-laws; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cotton leaves behind a profound legacy of service, mentorship, and compassion. He was a man who never met a stranger, who gave of himself freely, and who uplifted everyone he encountered. His life is a testament to the power of education, faith, and community, and while his passing has left a tremendous void in the community, his memory shall live forever in the hearts and minds of all who were blessed to know and love him.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby recognize and commend the life, legacy, and enduring contributions of Joseph M. Cotton Sr. and extends its sincere and heartfelt condolences to his family on the occasion of his passing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the family of Joseph M. Cotton Sr.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE