

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 180

BY SENATOR DUPLESSIS

A RESOLUTION

To express the sincere and heartfelt condolences of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the passing of Sharon Courtney and to honor her life, legacy, and contributions to the political fabric of the city of New Orleans and state of Louisiana.

WHEREAS, it is with profound sorrow that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana has learned of the passing of Sharon Courtney on May 21, 2026, after a brief and courageous battle with colon cancer; and

WHEREAS, Sharon was born in 1965 in Aberdeen, Mississippi, and graduated from the University of Mississippi in 1987 with a degree in journalism; and

WHEREAS, after graduating, Sharon moved to Washington, D.C., and began her career of thirty-eight years in government relations as a legislative assistant on Capitol Hill, first, in the office of Congressman Larkin Smith and then in the office of Congressman John Murtha where she spent five and one-half years focusing on health care and education issues; and

WHEREAS, in 1994, Sharon moved to New Orleans, Louisiana, which she called home for the next thirty-two years, ultimately becoming one of the loves of her life; and

WHEREAS, Sharon brought her valuable experience from Capitol Hill to Tulane University where she spent over thirty years leading community and government relations; and

WHEREAS, Sharon was a key advisor to Tulane's president, Scott Cowen, and played a vital role in reopening the university after Hurricane Katrina's floodwaters devastated the city and scattered students to other campuses; and

WHEREAS, Sharon was a champion for the rebuilding of post-Katrina New Orleans, and her efforts led to the securing of two hundred seventy-five million dollars in crucial funding for all the city's public and private universities; and

WHEREAS, Sharon was named a YLC Role Model by the Young Leadership Council in the spring of 2006; and

WHEREAS, during her tenure at Tulane University, she successfully managed community relations and secured the city's approval for a new on-campus football stadium, which helped to enliven the school's football program; and

WHEREAS, she was instrumental in kickstarting the New Orleans BioDistrict; creating a strategic plan for the twelve-hundred acre economic development district aimed at growing the biosciences sector; and

WHEREAS, in February of 2025, Sharon struck out on her own, founding Neutral Ground Strategies and continuing her higher education work by helping the University of New Orleans shore up its funding, all while in the hospital during her final days; and

WHEREAS, Sharon's professional work was not the only way she helped make New Orleans a better place to live, she also served in leadership roles for various boards, including Market Umbrella, ReNEW Schools, and the Data Center; and

WHEREAS, Sharon was often referred to as one of the few honest brokers left in the policy world, and gained a reputation as a steadfast advocate of the truth, constantly striving to make the world a better place; and

WHEREAS, Sharon was known to be a person of high moral character, respect, honesty, and integrity, even when what she had to say was not popular; and

WHEREAS, Sharon had a deep love of New Orleans and its cultural traditions; attending Jazz Fest every year she lived in the city, becoming a member of the Krewe of Muses and the Krewe of Dolly, and purchasing Saints season tickets in 2006; later being rewarded with a string of playoff games and a Super Bowl trip to Miami, Florida; and

WHEREAS, above all else, Sharon was a relationship cultivator, a generous and loyal friend, and a consummate host, and she was happiest with a crowded table of family and friends in her home where she often hosted dinners large and small; and

WHEREAS, her generosity was not merely hospitality, but generosity of the spirit; and

WHEREAS, Sharon is survived by her husband, Chris Allen; her parents, Jim and Diane Morgan; her siblings, Mark Courtney and Courtney Gregory (Clay), her beloved nephews, Eli, Fen, Jax, and Clay, and a plethora of friends and colleagues who will miss her deeply and remember her always.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby extend sincere and heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of Sharon Courtney and does hereby honor and recognize her remarkable life of service and legacy and her many contributions to the city of New Orleans and the state of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the family of Sharon Courtney.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE