

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 27

BY SENATORS THOMPSON, GALLOT, KOSTELKA, LONG, RISER AND  
WALSWORTH

A RESOLUTION

To express the sincere and heartfelt condolences of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the death of Wiley Wilson Hilburn Jr. of Choudrant, Louisiana.

WHEREAS, north Louisiana lost a beloved voice, remembered as "the Mark Twain of Louisiana", and journalism lost one of its treasured contributors on January 16, 2014, with the death of Wiley Hilburn Jr.; and

WHEREAS, Wiley Hilburn Jr., a native of Ruston, Louisiana, began his long career in journalism as a teenager at *The Ruston Daily Leader*; and

WHEREAS, he devoted over four decades to Louisiana Tech University as chair of the journalism department and director of the news bureau and, after retiring in 2009, he was named journalism professor emeritus and Distinguished Alumnus of the College of Liberal Arts; he was also selected to membership in the Louisiana Political Museum and Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, throughout his long teaching career, Mr. Hilburn guided numerous students into the profession of journalism, a profession for which he had great respect and love as an important American cultural institution, and he maintained close relationships, both professional and personal, with many of his students whom he influenced and mentored throughout his life, and he will no doubt live on in the hearts of each of those he touched; and

WHEREAS, for fifty years until his death, he published widely-read editorials and a cherished column in Gannett newspapers; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hilburn was widely known as a lover of jokes and as a practical joker who concocted elaborate ruses to confound his unsuspecting prey, seeing also the entertainment value when he was, in turn, the butt of a good practical joke; and

WHEREAS, there can be no greater tribute than to be remembered by his numerous friends, colleagues, readers, and former students in such prolific ways as finding "as much intrigue in the lives of everyday people as he did governors and celebrities"; creating pictures with "words that were his brush strokes ... from the majestic eagle to the melodious mockingbird, from the old-school Louisiana politician to the gathering of old men in a store"; as being "each of us, only better"; whose writing would "cause you to stop and really see something important and needed, something you'd missed, though right in front of your eyes"; and being "a strong and bold voice of contemplation and reason in tumultuous times, a peacemaker, a lover of nature, and a friend to many"; and

WHEREAS, the loss of Wiley Hilburn Jr. is profoundly felt by his wife, Kate Sartor; his children, Anne Marie Hilburn, Kevin Hilburn, and Greg Hilburn, and their mother, Ellen LaCroix; his stepdaughter, Jenny O'Driscoll; his brother, Chet Hilburn; his daughters-in-law, Holley Hilburn and Tania Hilburn; his grandchildren, Steven Ledford, William Ledford, Seth Hilburn, and twins Shyla and Shyenne Hilburn, and his father-in-law and mother-in-law, C. Lane and Gloria Sartor; and

WHEREAS, the success of the state of Louisiana, the strength of our communities, and the overall vitality of American society depends, in great measure, upon the dedication of great men like Wiley Wilson Hilburn Jr. who share their gifts of the written word with the world through their numerous works.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express its condolences to the family of Wiley Wilson Hilburn Jr. for their tremendous loss.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the family of Wiley Wilson Hilburn Jr.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE