

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 128

BY SENATORS ALARIO, ALLAIN, APPEL, BARROW, BISHOP, BOUDREAUX, BROWN, CARTER, CHABERT, CLAITOR, COLOMB, CORTEZ, DONAHUE, ERDEY, FANNIN, GATTI, HEWITT, JOHNS, LAFLEUR, LAMBERT, LONG, LUNEAU, MARTINY, MILKOVICH, MILLS, MIZELL, MORRELL, MORRISH, PEACOCK, PERRY, PETERSON, RISER, GARY SMITH, JOHN SMITH, TARVER, THOMPSON, WALSWORTH, WARD AND WHITE AND REPRESENTATIVES ABRAHAM, ABRAMSON, ADAMS, AMEDEE, ANDERS, ARMES, BACALA, BAGLEY, BAGNERIS, BARRAS, BERTHELOT, BILLIOT, BISHOP, BOUIE, BROADWATER, CHAD BROWN, TERRY BROWN, CARMODY, CARPENTER, GARY CARTER, ROBBY CARTER, STEVE CARTER, CHANEY, CONNICK, COUSSAN, COX, CROMER, DANAHAY, DAVIS, DEVILLIER, DWIGHT, EDMONDS, EMERSON, FALCONER, FOIL, FRANKLIN, GAINES, GAROFALO, GISCLAIR, GLOVER, GUINN, HALL, JIMMY HARRIS, LANCE HARRIS, HAVARD, HAZEL, HENRY, HENSGENS, HILFERTY, HILL, HODGES, HOFFMANN, HOLLIS, HORTON, HOWARD, HUNTER, HUVAL, IVEY, JACKSON, JAMES, JEFFERSON, JENKINS, MIKE JOHNSON, ROBERT JOHNSON, JONES, JORDAN, NANCY LANDRY, TERRY LANDRY, LEBAS, LEGER, LEOPOLD, LOPINTO, LYONS, MACK, MAGEE, MARCELLE, MCFARLAND, MIGUEZ, DUSTIN MILLER, GREGORY MILLER, MONToucET, MORENO, JAY MORRIS, JIM MORRIS, NORTON, PEARSON, PIERRE, POPE, PRICE, PUGH, PYLANT, REYNOLDS, RICHARD, SCHEXNAYDER, SCHRODER, SEABAUGH, SHADOIN, SIMON, SMITH, STOKES, TALBOT, THIBAUT, WHITE, WILLMOTT AND ZERINGUE

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To express the sincere and heartfelt condolences of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the passing of a beloved gentleman and mainstay in Louisiana politics, the Honorable Robert L. "Bobby" Freeman, and to celebrate the legacy of public service he leaves to his community, state, and nation.

WHEREAS, it was with deep regret that the Legislature of Louisiana learned of the death of former Lieutenant Governor Bobby Freeman who passed peacefully from this life on May 16, 2016, a short time after his eighty-second birthday; and

WHEREAS, Bobby Freeman was a humble servant of the people, eager to improve the status quo of those he served whether as legislator, statewide elected official, or city court judge; he was one of a rare breed who served at each level of government; and

WHEREAS, Bobby Freeman was also a pioneer, far ahead of his time, who envisioned enormous growth potential in the promotion and development of tourism as a cornerstone in building a new economic future for the state of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, born in Washington, D.C. and a lifelong resident of Iberville Parish, Robert Louis Freeman was a stellar athlete and boxer at Plaquemine High School where he won the 1951 Louisiana State Boxing Championship for his weight class; and

WHEREAS, as a talented pugilist in the ring, he was awarded an athletic scholarship to attend Louisiana State University where as a varsity letterman he held three consecutive Sugar Bowl boxing championship titles, placed twice as runner-up in the National College Athletic Association Boxing Championship, received the prestigious Billings Memorial Award for Boxing, and was inducted into the LSU Athletic Hall of Fame in 1977; and

WHEREAS, Bobby Freeman distinguished himself in military service as a special agent in the United States Army Counter-Intelligence Corps and was honorably discharged in 1959; and

WHEREAS, he obtained a law degree from Loyola University Law School in 1965, and established the law firm of Freeman and Pendley in Plaquemine; his legal career spanned more than five decades for which he received accolades from his peers and the Louisiana State Bar Association; and

WHEREAS, as a man of God, Bobby Freeman was a compassionate individual and lifelong democrat who felt a close connection to the less fortunate and felt compelled to be a voice for the disadvantaged and downtrodden; and

WHEREAS, in 1966, Bobby Freeman first answered the call to public service as chairman of the Plaquemine Planning and Zoning Commission, then ran for the first of three terms in the Legislature of Louisiana; he tirelessly represented the constituency of the Sixtieth District of the House of Representatives composed of the parishes of Iberville, Pointe Coupee, and West Baton Rouge; his legislative tenure spanned the administrations of governors John J. McKeithen and Edwin W. Edwards; and

WHEREAS, this was an exciting era in state government, as the transitional period before and after adoption of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974, when broad changes were applied to governmental functions; and

WHEREAS, Representative Freeman performed his duties with noteworthy aplomb, with membership on standing house committees that included Labor and Industrial Relations, Appropriations, Judiciary A, House and Governmental Affairs, and the special committee on Affairs of the House; he also provided invaluable guidance as floor leader for Governor Edwin Edwards; and

WHEREAS, through his extraordinary talents for compromise, he excelled as a strong supporter of organized labor, education, rural health care, and law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, an aggressive campaigner, Bobby Freeman became the 47th lieutenant governor for the state in 1980 and during his two consecutive terms he changed the course of the state's future, bolstered its economic capacities, and ushered in a new age of marketing tactics that propelled tourism into a viable growth industry; and

WHEREAS, consolidation of the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism and related functions within the office of lieutenant governor, had provided a launch pad for Bobby Freeman to centralize efforts to align Louisiana's unique culture and cuisine with promotion of its festivals, parks, museums, and other attractions which were coupled together with aggressive promotion of must-see locales throughout the entire state that expanded the popularity of Louisiana tourism beyond the realm of America's favorite tourist destination, the city of New Orleans; and

WHEREAS, his foresight has produced a hospitality industry that performs as one of the more outstanding generators in the state's economic engine; tourism venues annually employ more than 220,000 workers who welcome twenty-eight million visitors who spend an estimated 11.2 billion in tourist dollars which results in an estimated \$836 million in tax revenue; and by today's national estimates, Louisiana ranks fourth among all tourism markets in the United States; and

WHEREAS, in 1990, Bobby Freeman was elected for a six-year term as judge for the Plaquemine City Court, then stepped down from public life to practice law and to occasionally consult with young aspiring politicians; and

WHEREAS, he was honored with copious acknowledgments and awards during his lifetime that include receipt of the Louisiana National Guard Cross of Merit, the Martin Luther King Jr. Humanitarian Award, the A. Philip Randolph Institute Award (twice), the

United Native American Appreciation Award (twice), the Catholic Daughters of America Recognition Award, induction into the LSU Athletic Hall of Fame, the NCAA College Athletics Top 10 Hall of Fame, the Louisiana American Italian Sports Hall of Fame, the USA Southern Region Association Hall of Fame, the National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame, plus receipt of a knighthood from the Republic of Italy in recognition of his community service and his athletic and professional careers; and

WHEREAS, a very special and heartfelt recognition for Bobby Freeman as a statesman was his induction into the Louisiana Political Hall of Fame in 2008; and

WHEREAS, Bobby Freeman did not shy away from controversy, he embraced opposition, he did not back down from a cause that he felt was right and just; he was brave in the face of resistance, yet kind-hearted and courteous to all; and

WHEREAS, Lieutenant Governor Bobby Freeman and Governor Edwin Edwards remained friends for the remainder of his life; Edwards remembered him fondly as, "a giant of a man who never said a cross word . . . he was concerned with opportunities for the poor and underprivileged . . . we've remained the best of friends both personally and politically"; and

WHEREAS, Bobby Freeman is survived by his wife of fifty-seven years, Marianne Drago Freeman, his children, Robert Jr. and Lisa Freeman Guidry; his granddaughter Mary Katherine Freeman Koch, extended family, and cherished friends; and

WHEREAS, Winston Churchill once said, "What is the use of living, if it be not to strive for noble causes and to make this muddled world a better place for those who will live in it after we are gone?"; and

WHEREAS, Bobby Freeman was such a man and with his passing, the Legislature of Louisiana has lost a dear friend and colleague and the citizens of Louisiana have lost a dedicated, compassionate community leader; and

WHEREAS, in death, Bobby Freeman leaves a tremendous void in this state, however, he also leaves a rich and enduring legacy in the annals of Louisiana's political history as a forefather of Louisiana tourism and consummate public servant having provided leadership at all levels of government that include legislative, executive, judicial, and local administrations.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express heartfelt condolences upon the death of the Honorable Robert L. "Bobby" Freeman, former Lieutenant Governor, legislator, and judge for the state of Louisiana and does hereby celebrate the admirable legacy he leaves to this state.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Bobby Freeman shall be fondly remembered for his dignity, his compassion, and his service to his God, his state, and his country.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the family of the Honorable Robert L. "Bobby" Freeman.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES