

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 258

BY SENATORS CARTER AND PETERSON

A RESOLUTION

To commend Virginia Johnson on the occasion of her 100th birthday.

WHEREAS, it is with great pride that the citizens and the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana have learned that Virginia Johnson, a lifelong resident of the Carrollton area of New Orleans, Louisiana, will turn one hundred years old on June 14, 2019; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Johnson, the daughter of Pearl Hayes Johnson and James Joseph Johnson, is the oldest child and only girl in the family; and

WHEREAS, she started elementary at James Weldon Johnson, but was so far ahead of her class, she transferred to McDonogh #24, and was only ten years old in the sixth grade, she then went to Hoffman for junior high, and attended McDonogh #35 during high school on Julia and Rampart Streets; and

WHEREAS, against her mother's wishes, Virginia Johnson joined the United States Army in 1943 and served her state and her country for twenty-eight months; and

WHEREAS, she was sent to Des Moines, Iowa, where they were measured for uniforms, had classes, learned the rules and regulations, and it was determined if they were strong enough to serve; what is now referred to as basic training; and

WHEREAS, she was a typist in the United States Army and stationed at headquarters; she was Private First Class Johnson but was shortly promoted to a corporal who directed parade units; because she was the shortest one in the group, she had to help keep the line straight, when they rounded a corner, she would keep them in step; this is why the people of Des Moines always wanted them to be in the parades -- they kept a straight line, so when they had a parade, Virginia was called out with that unit; and

WHEREAS, after her military service, Virginia Johnson attended and graduated from Xavier University in 1950 with a bachelor of science degree; and

WHEREAS, she was a teacher at Carver High School for thirty-one years, teaching general science, physics, and chemistry; she loved chemistry and got all of the students at the school to take her chemistry classes; and

WHEREAS, while waiting for the Carver school to be built and for her assignment there to begin, she worked at her church, St. Joan of Arc, helping to raise money to build the new school with a group of elderly ladies; at that time she was the youngest one in the group, walking all over the state of Louisiana getting donations; the school was completed in 1958 and was almost fully paid for; and

WHEREAS, she also worked at Charity Hospital as a dietician; she stated that she worked right along with the other dieticians, "I had a floor I was responsible for and they had theirs, and my work there opened the way for many other Xavier students".; and

WHEREAS, after her retirement, Johnson continued to work to support her church parish, she taught religious education and was the cantor at the 4:00 p.m. Mass; and

WHEREAS, a group of women approached her who wanted to start a choir, and she graciously welcomed them; although she wanted to continue to sing the Catholic hymns, the group had other ideas and wanted a gospel group, so they "gospelized" the traditional hymns; although Johnson no longer sings with the choir, she is still active in the Ladies Sodality group and enjoys the Sunday gospel Mass; and

WHEREAS, the strength of our communities in Louisiana and the overall vitality of American society depend in great measure upon smart, brave, strong, and determined trailblazers like Virginia Johnson; and

WHEREAS, it is most appropriate that a sincere and heartfelt measure of commendation be extended to this remarkable and extraordinary woman and that her success and years should be acknowledged, honored, and celebrated.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend Virginia Johnson on the occasion of her 100th birthday celebration.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Virginia Johnson.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE