

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 5

BY SENATORS PEACOCK, ABRAHAM, ALLAIN, BARROW, BERNARD, BOUDREAUX, BOUIE, CARTER, CATHEY, CLOUD, CONNICK, CORTEZ, FESI, FIELDS, FOIL, HARRIS, HENRY, HENSGENS, HEWITT, JACKSON, JOHNS, LAMBERT, LUNEAU, MCMATH, MILLIGAN, FRED MILLS, ROBERT MILLS, MIZELL, MORRIS, PETERSON, POPE, PRICE, REESE, SMITH, TALBOT, TARVER, WARD, WHITE AND WOMACK

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To express the sincere condolences of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the passing of the Honorable Donald Wayne "Don" Williamson, to acknowledge his lifelong commitment to public service, and to note his many contributions made on behalf of the state of Louisiana.

WHEREAS, it is with deep remorse that the Legislature of Louisiana has learned of the death of businessman and former legislator, Don Williamson of Shreveport, who passed away on Sunday, November 10, 2019, at the age of ninety-two; and

WHEREAS, Don Williamson was an extraordinarily kind gentleman who led a well-balanced life as a public servant, businessman, and devout Christian; and

WHEREAS, Don embodied the best qualities of a public servant; he held a genuine interest in the people he served and felt a personal responsibility to represent all of his constituency with honesty and integrity; and

WHEREAS, he served in both local and state offices as a member and president of the Caddo School Board and served in both houses of the Legislature of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, while serving as school board president in the 1960s, Don Williamson navigated the turbulent times that occurred during the court-ordered desegregation process; his tact was to treat all citizens fairly while preserving the integrity of district schools; and

WHEREAS, he served with unwavering dedication as a member of the Louisiana House of Representatives from 1968 until 1972 representing the concerns of District One in Caddo Parish; and

WHEREAS, Williamson joined the group of young reform-minded legislators called

the "Young Turks" who demanded sweeping changes from the status quo; and

WHEREAS, during his service in the legislature, Representative Williamson garnered assignments to the House standing committees on education, ways and means, enrollment, and public works and institutions; and penned meaningful legislation to create Louisiana Public Broadcasting, to establish the Northwestern Louisiana Rehabilitation Hospital, and to reorganize vocational education; and

WHEREAS, in 1972, he ran for the seat in Senate District 39 and served for eight years; his honest reputation garnered legislative assignments to Senate committees on commerce, education, health and welfare (as chairman and vice chairman), retirement, and the Joint Committee on Education (as chairman); and

WHEREAS, during his tenure in the Senate, legislation was passed that changed Louisiana State University Shreveport from a two-year academic program to a four-year undergraduate degree-granting institution, advanced career education, established the Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Commission, provided mobile voter registration offices in the parishes of Caddo and DeSoto, created the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center-Shreveport, ratified the Red River Compact and the Caddo Lake Compact, and established protection procedures for nursing home patients; and

WHEREAS, born into a family that was heavily involved in local politics; Donald Wayne Williamson was the son of Earl Williamson and the former Mamie Greer; he attended Vivian High School where he met and married his sweetheart, Norma Jean Herring; theirs was a Christian home filled with love and laughter for nearly fifty-seven years until her passing in 2002; and

WHEREAS, in 1946, he attended Centenary College for a year before beginning employment at General Electric in Schenectady, New York, in conjunction with the United States Navy atomic fusion plant; and

WHEREAS, in 1951, Don returned to Vivian to begin his business enterprises that consisted of a drug store, furniture store, and several real estate developments; his business acumen led to expanded business ventures throughout Shreveport and Caddo Parishes; and

WHEREAS, Don served his community through his participation in fraternal and nonprofit organizations as president of the chapter of Lions Club International of Vivian, a

32nd Degree Mason in the Vivian Masonic Lodge #38, and a member of the Downtown Shreveport Rotary Club; and

WHEREAS, Don Williamson experienced both success and failure in election campaigns, however he was never discouraged by the losses because he felt it was his civic and Christian duty to serve and to improve the circumstance of his fellow man; and

WHEREAS, at First Baptist Church of Shreveport, Don actively served as a deacon, Sunday School teacher, and mentor to others in the congregation professing his faith and security in God's love and mercy; and

WHEREAS, he is survived by his daughter, Sherry Williamson Paschall (John) and sons, Guy Williamson (Pam), and Randy Williamson (Gayle); his sister, Jean Bright; brothers, Clayton Williamson (Nette) and Ted Williamson (Connie); six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren, extended family and a host of friends; and

WHEREAS, Don Williamson was a singular individual with a generous nature, blessed with an abundance of determination and skills; he performed his public service proudly and willingly; he extended courtesy to all; and he leaves a rich and unique legacy of good works to his family, community, and state.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express its sincere condolences upon the passing of the Honorable Donald Wayne "Don" Williamson, former legislator and Shreveport businessman and does hereby acknowledge his lifelong commitment to public service.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to his daughter, Sherry Williamson Paschall.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES