

2020 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 23

BY SENATOR BOUDREAUX

CONDOLENCES. Expresses condolences upon the death of Dr. Ray P. Authement, former University of Louisiana at Lafayette president.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To express the sincere condolences of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the
3 death of Dr. Ray P. Authement, former president of the University of Louisiana at
4 Lafayette.

5 WHEREAS, it is with deep regret and profound sorrow that the members of the
6 Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana have learned of the passing of Dr. Ray P. Authement
7 on April 5, 2020, at the age of ninety-one; and

8 WHEREAS, Ray Authement was born on November 19, 1928, in Boudreaux Canal
9 in South Louisiana, and from humble beginnings was raised to place a high value on
10 education, family, and faith; and

11 WHEREAS, as a first-generation college student, he was driven by the desire to
12 ensure that others like him could have the opportunity to experience a first-rate education;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, his early love for academics led him to leave home and hitchhike to
15 Lafayette to attend the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (ULL), then known as
16 Southwestern Louisiana Institute, where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Physics with a
17 minor in mathematics and went on to earn his master's and doctoral degrees in mathematics
18 from LSU; and

1 WHEREAS, Dr. Authement spent time as a mathematics instructor at LSU, an
2 associate professor at McNeese State University, then known as McNeese State College, and
3 a visiting professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and

4 WHEREAS, he joined the ULL faculty as a professor in mathematics in 1957 and
5 dedicated the rest of his career to the university; in 1966 he was named academic vice
6 president, was promoted to vice president four years later, and in 1973, was a unanimous
7 choice to become the fifth president in the university's history; and

8 WHEREAS, between 1974 and 2008, Dr. Authement steered Louisiana's second
9 largest university deliberately and confidently, advancing it from a solid regional university
10 to one worthy of national and international attention; and

11 WHEREAS, although resources were limited, he made smart, bold, and calculated
12 decisions; he invested resources in biology and computer science long before other
13 universities; during the downturn of the 1980s, he led efforts to diversify the area's economy;
14 and, by establishing the 143-acre University Research Park, ULL focused on attracting
15 research centers, scientists, and grant funds to the region and is still home to several national
16 and statewide research centers; and

17 WHEREAS, the highlights of university achievements under his leadership include
18 changing its name to gain more prestige as the University of Louisiana at Lafayette;
19 implementing academic admissions standards to support more academically prepared
20 students, increase the prestige of the degree, and achieve better academic outcomes; growing
21 the endowment from \$500,000 to \$122 million, largely through the "Investing in Our Future"
22 campaign during the university's Centennial celebration; raising funds to attract and retain
23 top faculty by establishing twenty \$1 million endowed chairs and 217 \$100,000 endowed
24 professorships; becoming the first Doctoral II University in Louisiana; competing in
25 NCAA's Division I, the highest level of collegiate athletic competition; increasing gifted
26 assets from about \$500,000 to more than \$150 million; receiving national accolades from
27 organizations like the National Science Foundation and the Carnegie Foundation; and
28 earning a strong national reputation in the fields of computer science, environmental and
29 biological research, and Francophone studies; establishing seventeen centers to help create
30 companies, grow jobs, and diversify the economy; and constructing more than thirty

1 buildings and facilities and renovated or expanded more than twenty-five others; and

2 WHEREAS, among the new buildings, include B.I. Moody Hall (home to the B.I.
3 Moody College of Business Administration), James R. Oliver Hall (home to Advanced
4 Computer Technology and Research Center), the Paul and Lulu Hillard University Art
5 Museum, the Leon Moncla Indoor Practice Facility for Athletics, the Cajundome, and the
6 Convention Center; and

7 WHEREAS, because of Dr. Authement's fiscal responsibility, the university became
8 debt-free even as the campus was expanding which enabled him to reward faculty members
9 for their commitment; and

10 WHEREAS, Dr. Authement retired from the university in 2008 as the longest serving
11 president of any public university in the nation, having served ULL for thirty-four years with
12 fierce dedication as the public face of the university; and

13 WHEREAS, in recognition of his historic contributions, the university renamed the
14 College of Sciences the Ray P. Authement College of Sciences in 2008 and in 2009, the
15 University of Louisiana System named Dr. Authement President Emeritus of the University
16 of Louisiana at Lafayette; and

17 WHEREAS, Dr. Authement was a faithful member of the Our Lady of Wisdom
18 Parish; and

19 WHEREAS, he was preceded in death by his parents Elios and Elphia Authement,
20 his oldest sister Nell Page (Charlie), and his daughter Kathy Elizabeth Prouet; and

21 WHEREAS, Dr. Authement is survived by his wife of sixty-nine years Barbara
22 Braud Authement; a daughter Julie Authement Johnson (Chris); five grandchildren, Jacob
23 and Benjamin Johnson, Philip Prouet (Emily), Lauren Newbill (Wes) and Michelle Prouet;
24 great-grandchildren Graham and Parker Prouet; brothers Don Authement (Suzanne), Ronnie
25 Authement (Jane); and sisters Norma Dill (Gerald, deceased), and Rosalie Tipton (John); and

26 WHEREAS, he will be remembered as a committed husband, a loving father and
27 grandfather, a humble servant, a passionate visionary, an aggressive fundraiser, an academic
28 steward, and the Ragin' Cajun's biggest sports fan who dedicated his life to enhancing the
29 University of Louisiana at Lafayette and higher education in Louisiana.

30 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana

1 does hereby extend sincere and heartfelt condolences to the family, friends, and former
2 colleagues upon the passing of Dr. Ray P. Authement and does hereby recognize and pay
3 posthumous tribute to his contributions made toward the betterment of postsecondary
4 education in Louisiana through the growth and development of the University of Louisiana
5 at Lafayette during his lengthy association as student, educator, and administrator.

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to
7 Barbara Braud Authement.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Jerry J. Guillot.

DIGEST

SR 23 Original 2020 Regular Session Boudreaux

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