

2020 First Extraordinary Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 9

BY REPRESENTATIVES DAVIS, BAGLEY, BRASS, HILFERTY, JAMES, LACOMBE,
MAGEE, PIERRE, SCHEXNAYDER, STAGNI, AND TURNER AND
SENATORS FOIL, MCMATH, AND WARD

CONDOLENCES: Expresses condolences on the death of Samir Salman, accomplished
civil engineer and distinguished LSU alumnus

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 To express sincere and heartfelt condolences upon the death of Samir Salman, accomplished
3 civil engineer and distinguished alumnus of Louisiana State University.

4 WHEREAS, Samir Shamoun Salman died peacefully at his home in Baton Rouge
5 surrounded by his loving wife and children on May 27, 2020, after a courageous and
6 characteristically tenacious battle with cancer; and

7 WHEREAS, Samir was born to the late Maria Aslan Salman and Shamoun Salman
8 on April 1, 1940, in Zahlé, Lebanon; and

9 WHEREAS, after graduating from secondary school in Damascus, Syria, Samir
10 worked for four years as a teacher of mathematics and logic and as a soccer coach in order
11 to save enough money to come to America in 1963 to study engineering at Louisiana State
12 University; and

13 WHEREAS, though Samir essentially spoke no English at all when he arrived in
14 Baton Rouge, with incredible determination, he graduated from LSU in 1966, having
15 completed in three years a bachelor of science in civil engineering degree program that
16 typically took at least five years for most students to finish; and

17 WHEREAS, Samir's distinguished career in engineering began at the agency that was
18 then known as the Louisiana Department of Highways, where he worked on the Atchafalaya
19 Basin Bridge project and gained experience in the design of major structures, structural
20 support systems, and bridge inspection procedures; and

1 WHEREAS, in 1973, Samir moved overseas to manage large-scale road and bridge
2 projects in the Middle East and Turkey; his exceptional talents and knowledge of languages,
3 laws, local customs, international construction codes, geography, and geology positioned
4 him well to lead globally significant infrastructure projects, which he would do for the
5 remainder of a long and productive career; and

6 WHEREAS, beginning in the mid-1970s, Samir led the design and construction of
7 the first road to connect the Arabian Gulf by land to the Arabian Sea and also supervised the
8 construction of numerous major structures in fast-growing urban areas of Saudi Arabia; and

9 WHEREAS, after coming out of a brief first retirement in 1988, Samir embarked on
10 what was perhaps his greatest engineering achievement: building, over the course of twelve
11 years, the first of the Trans-European Motorways, a dual three-lane highway through Turkey
12 which links Europe to the Middle East; and

13 WHEREAS, a part of this road, the one hundred sixty mile long
14 Tarsus-Adana-Gaziantep Motorway in southeastern Turkey, built through an active seismic
15 zone and featuring eleven concrete and steel viaducts, one of which is forty-five stories high
16 and the third-tallest in Europe, is regarded as a marvel of modern civil engineering; and

17 WHEREAS, while working in Baton Rouge before he embarked on his international
18 career, Samir met and married the love of his life, Rita Mae Pizzolatto, a dental hygienist
19 and Loyola University New Orleans graduate originally of Houma; and

20 WHEREAS, Rita and Samir would both recall fondly the days of their courtship
21 when he introduced her to traditional Lebanese cuisine, which he prepared himself as foods
22 such as yogurt and hummus were not yet common here, and brought her to see Louisiana's
23 first high-mast road lighting, which he had built, on Airline Highway; and

24 WHEREAS, Rita and Samir were married on February 24, 1973, at Christ the King
25 Catholic Church on the LSU campus and they later welcomed into the world a daughter,
26 Samira Anne, and a son, Sammer Joseph; and

27 WHEREAS, the couple raised their children both in Baton Rouge and abroad, living
28 for periods in Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey, with shorter
29 stints in Syria and the United Kingdom, the children attending school for a time in

1 Switzerland, and they enjoyed the wonders and navigated the challenges of making the
2 world their home; and

3 WHEREAS, Samir did not live only to work; he loved to dance and to *khafila* often
4 with friends and family; and

5 WHEREAS, he and Rita hosted countless gatherings of family and good friends and
6 they delighted in treating people to good times and wonderful food, serving homemade
7 Lebanese fare and classic Louisiana Italian dishes in abundance and with love; and

8 WHEREAS, Samir finally retired in the early 2000s, settled permanently with Rita
9 in Baton Rouge, and treasured time with his children, whom he loved fiercely, as they each
10 finished their education at LSU and went on to careers in Texas and New York City; and

11 WHEREAS, among his greatest pleasures in his later years were doting on his two
12 beautiful grandchildren, seeing his family find happiness and success, and, as a man who had
13 come to love American football and also lived in the Tiger Stadium dormitory long ago,
14 relishing the LSU football team's amazing performances and national championships; and

15 WHEREAS, left to cherish his memory are his loved ones in the United States,
16 Turkey, Syria, Sweden, and the Netherlands: his devoted wife of forty-seven years, Rita
17 Pizzolatto Salman; his daughter, son, and daughter-in-law, Samira, Sammer, and Brooke
18 Dickerson Salman; grandson and granddaughter Felix and Clara Salman; brother Elie
19 Salman; sisters Maha Salman Aras, Huda Salman Saliba, and Muna Salman Gabriel;
20 numerous in-laws, nieces, nephews, and other beloved members of his extended family; and
21 a host of close friends around the world including many engineering colleagues.

22 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
23 express sincere and heartfelt condolences upon the death of Samir Salman; does hereby
24 recognize his many accomplishments; and does hereby record his singular contributions and
25 achievements, which will forever be a source of pride and honor for his family.

26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted
27 to the family of Samir Salman.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

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Expresses the condolences of the legislature on the death of Samir Salman.