

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 80

BY SENATOR FIELDS

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To commend Mr. Johnnie A. Jones Sr. for his legendary accomplishments as a decorated veteran of World War II and a civil rights pioneer.

WHEREAS, Mr. Johnnie A. Jones Sr., a Louisiana native and son of lease croppers, was born in Laurel Hill on November 30, 1919, and began his high school education at Southern University Demonstration School (now known as Southern Lab); and

WHEREAS, Mr. Jones then attended Southern University in Baton Rouge until he was drafted into the United States Army to serve in World War II, and he became the first African-American soldier to be named a warrant officer in the U.S. Army; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Jones survived the Battle of the Bulge, the largest battle ever fought by the U.S. Army and a major factor in bringing about the end of WWII; and

WHEREAS, upon returning to Louisiana after WWII, Mr. Jones was denied the opportunity to join any military groups and was beaten by a sheriff during a traffic stop while en route to New Orleans to have a piece of shrapnel removed from his neck; when he reported to Camp Shelby in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, he encountered racism with its separate lines for blacks and whites and was approached by an armed man shouting at him, "Boy, you need to move over there", all harsh reminders that he was back in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Jones has had his cars blown up three times by the Ku Klux Klan because of his involvement in civil rights issues; and

WHEREAS, following the lack of recognition and appreciation for his service to his country, Mr. Jones decided to return to Southern University to complete his law degree, believing that racial changes could be brought about through the law; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Jones was only a two-week graduate from Southern University Law School when Rev. T. J. Jemison asked him to serve as the lawyer for the 1953 Baton Rouge Bus Boycott, the country's first large scale bus boycott challenging segregation; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Jones did not hesitate to shoulder this monumental responsibility; the boycott ended in two weeks when the Baton Rouge City Council passed an ordinance reforming the bus company's segregationist seating policy; and

WHEREAS, two years later the 1953 Baton Rouge Bus Boycott served as the blueprint for the Montgomery Bus Boycott, spearheaded by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., who visited Baton Rouge to prepare with Mr. Jones and others; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Jones served in the Louisiana House of Representatives from 1972-1976, was the first African-American member of the Baton Rouge Bar Association, and practiced law until age ninety-three; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Jones, during his fifty-seven-year legal career, successfully fought for pay equity for teachers; sued to desegregate local parks, pools, amusement centers, schools, and courtrooms; represented Southern University student-protesters during the Civil Rights Era; guarded the constitutional rights of countless indigent defendants; and challenged voter discrimination practices.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend Mr. Johnnie A. Jones Sr. for his legendary accomplishments as a decorated veteran of World War II and a successful and effective civil rights leader.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Mr. Jones' laudable record has left an indelible mark on civil rights and that his accomplishments and service to Louisiana and the United States are hereby recorded for posterity.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Mr. Johnnie A. Jones Sr.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES