

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 98

BY SENATOR CORTEZ

A RESOLUTION

To express the sincere and heartfelt condolences of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the passing of James Pitman Hesterly Jr.

WHEREAS, James Pitman Hesterly Jr. was born on August 31, 1950, in Alexandria, Louisiana, to Mary Moselle Alexander Hesterly and James Pitman Hesterly Sr.; and, as a baby, his parents nicknamed him "Pit", a name that remained his moniker for life; and

WHEREAS, Pit's family moved to Lafayette, Louisiana, in 1962, and from that time, beginning in the sixth grade, Pit left a legacy in Lafayette as a trustworthy and honorable man, one who embraced life's gifts; and

WHEREAS, Pit was the most elegant man his family had ever known and he taught his sons many lessons, including the fact that a navy blue blazer, a black belt, and black shoes should be staples in every gentleman's wardrobe; and

WHEREAS, Pit wore his clothes with sartorial splendor, complementing his charming speech and magnetic personality; Pit was known for his exquisite taste in Italian fabrics, his appreciation for fine leather, sterling belt buckles, and hand-fashioned hats; he loved alligator shoes and a nice pair of sunglasses which he occasionally even wore indoors; and

WHEREAS, a patron of the arts and a true Renaissance Man, Pit loved all things beautiful; he supported local artists and considered himself a modest collector; he loved visiting museums and galleries and exposing his family to cultural enrichment; and

WHEREAS, Pit fostered the love of music in his wife and children, showing them the joy of listening to Pavarotti, Motown, Broadway musicals, and Irish folk songs; and

WHEREAS, Pit enjoyed reading and writing poetry; he frequently shared with friends poems written by the one and only "Shakespeare Thibodeaux" a favorite pseudonym; and

WHEREAS, Pit established J. P. Hesterly Jr. and Associates in 1980 as a brokerage

house offering independent petroleum land services for clients in Louisiana and Texas; and

WHEREAS, Pit employed countless men and women, giving a number of landmen their first job in the business; his ease of manner and kindness to each employee made him a most endearing boss; Pit's business associates became his close friends as he forged lifelong relationships with the finest professionals in the land business; and his gifts of stewardship, blessings that Pit recognized every single day, cannot be overstated; and

WHEREAS, Pit became a runner in 1981 after drafting a dear friend, Tom Hopkins, to be his roommate and coach; together they formed "Hopkins Harriers", training with a faithful group of athletes for many years; and Pit successfully competed in numerous road races, marathons, biathlons, and triathlons across the South; and

WHEREAS, Pit took great pleasure in authoring a column in the newsletter of Red Lerille's Health and Racquet Club (Red's) entitled "Feets of Endurance" and when Pit was forced to quit running due to health issues, he began swimming at Red's where he enjoyed a new camaraderie; Pit's athleticism, accompanied by his fierce competitive spirit, laid the foundation for countless friendships; and

WHEREAS, Pit adored sports, especially golf, college basketball and football, major league baseball, and horse racing; his impressive collection of sports memorabilia was only rivaled by his ability to recite the important dates, players, and statistics of his favorite teams; and

WHEREAS, Pit hosted the Hesterly Invitational Golf Tournament for many years; he loved to attend live sporting events with his family, especially high stakes Louisiana State University football games; he attended several World Series games to watch his beloved Giants; he walked the hallowed ground of Augusta National many times; and he graced Churchill Downs with his presence more than once at the Kentucky Derby - perhaps his favorite event of all; and

WHEREAS, as both a coach and a mentor, Pit gave freely and lovingly to a generation of young men who crossed his path; his coaching career began with his son Pitman at Woodvale T-ball and extended on the soccer field until his son Miles graduated from high school; and with his coaching partner, Scott Yerby, they took the Lafayette Futbol Club Arsenal team to the state championship more than once, winning the title in 2007; and

WHEREAS, Pit could spin a tale, display a vast knowledge of esoteric topics, quote Shakespeare, sing the entire musical score from *Oklahoma!*, command the Scrabble board, spell like a champion, and name world capitals with ease; and

WHEREAS, his brilliance shone in his mastery of the English language; nobody could turn a phrase, assign a nickname, or describe life with humor and a beautiful perspective like Pit; he made life better, he made it easier, and he made it more wonderful; and

WHEREAS, Pit was humble, never seeking accolades or applause; he served many people of all walks of life and gave generously to his family and friends; and

WHEREAS, he preferred to give rather than to receive, and his favorite moments were treating his family to a fine meal, a glorious trip, or a long journey on the road; he lived to create lasting memories for his wife Elizabeth, and their sons, Pitman and Miles; and

WHEREAS, Pit's heart was full of love for his fellow man, most notably evident in his intense desire to help people suffering with addiction; having gone through treatment for substance abuse himself, Pit felt led by God to help others who struggled; and with God's guidance, he supported them to find a new life of sobriety; and

WHEREAS, Pit cherished his church, Episcopal Church of Ascension, and he loved his church family who prayed for him faithfully for twenty-five years; and

WHEREAS, Pit was a graduate of Disciples of Christ in Community and served the Lord well at Ascension: as a vestry member and Junior Warden, as co-chairman of the Capital Campaign, as an usher and youth minister, as a member of the Men's Club, as a stewardship volunteer, and as a student of God's word in the adult Bible study class on Sunday mornings; and

WHEREAS, Pit served on the board of directors of the Lafayette Town House, the Acadiana Symphony Orchestra, and The Well; Pit participated in Relay for Life as a team member as runners ran through the night raising money for the American Cancer Society; he organized the Games of Acadian Triathlon, enlisting the help of many local runners to benefit The Miles Perret Center; he was a former member of Oakbourne Country Club and Escondido in the Hill Country of Texas, two places where he showcased his love of golf with friends; and

WHEREAS, Pit is survived by his wife of almost thirty-eight years, Elizabeth O'Roark Hesterly; his son James Pitman Hesterly III, his wife Natalie Tuminello and their soon-to-be-born daughter, Grace Elizabeth Hesterly; his son Miles Crocker Hesterly, his wife Courtney Sykes and their newborn son Charles McConnell Hesterly; his sister Cynthia Hesterly Powell and her husband Richard Powell; his sister-in-law Kay Hesterly; his brother William Stephens Hesterly and his wife Denise Anderson; his sister Mary Hesterly Frantz and her husband Steve Frantz; his father-in-law Walter O'Roark Jr.; his mother-in-law Betsy Vigorito; his brother-in-law Walter O'Roark III and his wife Bell deGravelle; his sister-in-law Rebecca O'Roark Voyles and her husband Russell Voyles; and numerous nieces and nephews who loved him like a father; and

WHEREAS, Pit is also survived by Drew Saab and Parker Reaux, two young men he loved as honorary sons; his special friend Marie Oury who he considered his French daughter; and his little ballerina "Adelaide," his cherished Sheltie; and

WHEREAS, Pit is also predeceased by his beloved brother John Joseph Hesterly with whom he shared a special bond and who walked with him through a difficult journey with grace; Pit counted on John for his exceptional professional skills, faithful companionship, and the godly devotion of a best friend; their dual diagnoses might have shattered a lesser pair of men, yet they held onto each other in prayer and faith, exhibiting inspirational strength, courage, and fortitude; and

WHEREAS, James Pitman Hesterly Jr. lived a fulfilling and dedicated life and his passing leaves a void in the community where he will be truly missed.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express sincere and heartfelt condolences upon the passing of James Pitman Hesterly Jr.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to his wife, Elizabeth O'Roark Hesterly.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE