

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 78

BY SENATOR FOIL

A RESOLUTION

To express the sincere condolences of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the passing of Dr. Harry Heil Roberts, Boyd Professor Emeritus of Louisiana State University, and to recognize his distinguished contributions to the fields of marine geology and oceanography, as well as his lasting impact on higher education and scientific advancement in the state of Louisiana and beyond.

WHEREAS, it is with deep regret and profound respect that the Senate has learned of the passing of Dr. Harry Heil Roberts, PhD, on March 26, 2025, at the age of eighty-five; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Roberts was born on February 2, 1940, in Huntington, West Virginia, and raised in Milton, where he excelled both academically and athletically, graduating from Milton High School in 1958 and earning his Bachelor of Science in Physics from Marshall University in 1963, where he also played point guard for the Thundering Herd basketball team; and

WHEREAS, he continued his academic pursuits at Louisiana State University, where he earned his Master of Science in Geology in 1966 and his PhD in Geology in 1969, thus beginning a remarkable career spanning over five decades in marine geology and oceanography; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Roberts dedicated his professional life to Louisiana State University's Coastal Studies Institute, rising from instructor to director and ultimately earning the university's highest academic honor when he was named a Boyd Professor in 2001 and Boyd Professor Emeritus in 2006; and

WHEREAS, he made groundbreaking contributions to the scientific understanding of the Gulf of Mexico, including the discovery and direct observation of frozen methane hydrates, the mapping of the seafloor, and research into deltaic dynamics, sedimentation, and coastal sustainability; and

WHEREAS, his prolific scholarly output includes over 200 peer-reviewed publications and numerous professional honors, including the prestigious Shephard's Medal in 2003 for sustained excellence in marine geology, as well as fellowships from the Geological Society of America, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the National Science Foundation; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Roberts received numerous additional accolades throughout his career, including the Doris Malkin Curtis Medal, the Grover Murray Best Published Paper Award, the Distinguished Research Master Award, and the Joe and Richard Lipsey Professional Educators Award, among others; and

WHEREAS, he also served as an editor for major scientific journals, mentored generations of marine geologists, and earned the admiration of colleagues and students alike for his dedication, insight, and generous spirit; and

WHEREAS, beyond his professional accomplishments, Dr. Roberts was a devoted family man who lovingly supported his son, Andrew Roberts, M.D., and daughter-in-law, Maryna Roberts, and was a tireless caretaker to his late wife, Mary Sue Roberts; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Roberts will be remembered not only for his transformative scientific work, but also for his kindness, humility, deep curiosity, and the selfless generosity with which he served his family, students, and community.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express its deepest condolences upon the passing of Dr. Harry Heil Roberts, commends his legacy of academic excellence and scientific discovery, and recognizes the profound impact of his life's work on the state of Louisiana, the nation, and the world.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE