

Regular Session, 2014

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 175

BY SENATOR ALARIO

CONDOLENCES. Express condolences upon the death of John Maginnis, legendary Louisiana political journalist, publisher, and author.

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 To express the sincere and heartfelt condolences of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the
3 passing of John Maginnis, legendary Louisiana political journalist, publisher, and
4 author.

5 WHEREAS, it is with deep regret and profound sadness that the Legislature of
6 Louisiana has learned of the death of John Maginnis on Sunday, May 25, 2014, at the age
7 of sixty-six; and

8 WHEREAS, born on March 17, 1948, John was a newsman from the very start,
9 delivering *The State-Times* on his bike after school, and attended Sacred Heart Catholic
10 School and Catholic High School Baton Rouge, where he began his writing career with a
11 regular column in the high school newsletter; and

12 WHEREAS, at Louisiana State University, John was editor of *The Daily Reveille*,
13 in which he published a daily column, and he was inducted in 2000 into the Hall of Fame
14 of the LSU Manship School of Mass Communication; and

15 WHEREAS, following his graduation from college and service in the United States
16 Navy, John returned to Baton Rouge in 1972, which marked Edwin Edwards' first term as
17 governor, and John's thoughts were, "Why leave Louisiana? Great Place. Good story"; forty-
18 two years later, upon John's death, Governor Edwards noted that John "played an important

1 role in monitoring the affairs of our state and always called it as he saw it"; and

2 WHEREAS, it was in 1972 when John entered the realm of Louisiana political
3 journalism with the publication of *Gris Gris* magazine, and he continued carving out his role
4 as the state's foremost figure in this arena with the *Louisiana Political Review*, which
5 evolved in the 1990s into *The Fax Weekly*, was shortly thereafter renamed *LaPolitics*
6 *Weekly*, and is now published by twenty-one media outlets around the state; and

7 WHEREAS, John was a mentor to younger journalists, and in recent years, he
8 expanded his extremely popular and influential column and its digital counterpart,
9 LaPolitics.com, by adding new staff, developing media partnerships, and broadening its
10 editorial scope; and

11 WHEREAS, in addition to his achievements as a publisher and journalist, John
12 authored three books about Louisiana politics, *The Last Hayride*, *Cross to Bear*, and *The*
13 *Politics of Reform*, all of which helped make his name synonymous with Louisiana politics;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, because of his genuine warmth, likeable demeanor, and unwavering
16 fairness, people liked and trusted John, and he cultivated sources throughout state
17 government; he did not take sides or use his notebook as a pulpit for any one agenda over
18 another, as his passion was not partisanship but politics and, of course, Louisiana's colorful
19 political personalities; and

20 WHEREAS, United States Representative Steve Scalise noted John's "unique talent
21 for telling a story in a way that made it come to life for his readers"; his columns truly
22 needed no byline, as he had a way with words that was his own; he conveyed news, but it
23 was news informed by his signature analysis, insights, and comedic touch, and his writings
24 had a depth and breadth that made his work invaluable to his readers and a fundamental part
25 of the historical record of politics in this state; and

26 WHEREAS, though widely respected, admired, and regarded as the gold standard
27 in his field, John remained soft spoken and humble; while he often responded to
28 compliments of his work by saying, "I owe it all to the material", the citizens of Louisiana
29 know that we owe much of our political knowledge to John; his influence extended far
30 beyond the borders of this state, as he was a featured speaker for civic groups and other

1 organizations across the Gulf Coast, and when national journalists needed a source on
2 Louisiana politics, John was the "go-to" person because for the better part of half a century,
3 there has simply been no one more identified with Louisiana political journalism than John
4 Maginnis; and

5 WHEREAS, John's career spanned the terms of five governors, including Governor
6 Bobby Jindal, who stated upon John's passing, "It's safe to say he is the historian on
7 Louisiana politics"; and

8 WHEREAS, United States Senator Mary Landrieu also paid tribute to John when
9 commenting, "Louisiana has lost its premier political commentator ... John was largely
10 responsible for making politics Louisiana's second-favorite pastime, just after football"; and

11 WHEREAS, in addition to his highly significant professional contributions, John was
12 a vibrant example of one who enthusiastically embraced the priorities of a life fully lived,
13 especially through his dedication to his wife and extended family; and

14 WHEREAS, John married late in life when he found the very special Jackie
15 Drinkwater, and they made their home in Baton Rouge while spending many weekends in
16 New Orleans, a city that was close to his heart; and

17 WHEREAS, known both for his strong work ethic and his gregarious personality,
18 John balanced his professional responsibilities during the work week with his attendance at
19 social gatherings, and weekends found him unwinding in the Crescent City with his beloved
20 Jackie, relaxing at their condominium and strolling through the French Quarter; and

21 WHEREAS, with his brilliant mind, his keen sense of humor, his genuinely kind
22 heart, and the twinkle in his eye, John Maginnis represented all that is good about this state;
23 the very embodiment of *joie de vivre*, he loved Louisiana, loved life, and most of all, loved
24 his family, including Jackie, his brother, Michael John Maginnis, his sisters, Renee Maginnis
25 Dole and Kathleen Maginnis Bierman, his nieces and nephews, who will deeply miss "Uncle
26 Johnny", and his cousins and other relatives, all of whom will cherish memories of times
27 spent with John and of the love and laughter he brought to their lives; and

28 WHEREAS, though John's death leaves a tremendous void in this state and what
29 Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco describes as "a great hole at the Capitol", where he
30 was a constant fixture and an institution unto himself, he will always be highly regarded for

1 earning the trust and admiration of the state's lawmakers and respected for his integrity by
2 those who walk these halls; and

3 WHEREAS, it is only appropriate to take proper notice of the singular
4 accomplishments of John Maginnis and to express the immense pride of the people of this
5 state in this wonderful gentleman who will be immeasurably missed but certainly never
6 forgotten.

7 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
8 express sincere and heartfelt condolences upon the death of John Maginnis, legendary
9 Louisiana journalist, publisher, and author, does hereby recognize that his legacy of
10 excellence and professionalism shall forever endure, and does hereby record for posterity
11 the abiding appreciation of the citizens of Louisiana for his extraordinary contributions.

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to
13 John's wife, Jackie Drinkwater-Maginnis.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Thomas L. Tyler.

DIGEST

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