

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 146

BY SENATORS MORRISH, JOHNS, LAFLEUR AND JOHN SMITH AND REPRESENTATIVES ABRAHAM, ARMES, DANAHAY, DWIGHT, FRANKLIN, GUINN, HENSGENS AND HILL

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To express the sincere and heartfelt condolences of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the passing of Dr. Robert Hebert, former president of McNeese State University and to commend his life and his legacy of contributions made on behalf of postsecondary education.

WHEREAS, it is with heavy hearts that the Legislature of Louisiana learned of the passing of this distinguished administrator, educator, and community leader, Dr. Robert "Bob" Hebert, former president and President Emeritus of McNeese State University in Lake Charles, Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, Robert Hebert embodied all of the finest characteristics of an academic administrator; he had an open and engaging nature and he was prone to initiate lively conversations and probing questions; and

WHEREAS, a native of Abbeville, Bob obtained a bachelor of art's degree from the University of Southwestern Louisiana, now known as the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, and continued his educational pursuits at Florida State University where he was awarded a master's degree and a Doctorate of Philosophy in history; and

WHEREAS, Bob came to McNeese in 1969 as an associate professor of history; from 1980-1987, he served as vice president of academic affairs, director of Basic Studies, chairman of the University Curriculum Committee, president of the Faculty Senate, and a professor in the Department of History; and in 1987, he became the fifth president of the university serving in that capacity for twenty-three years before his retirement in June 2010; and

WHEREAS, in 1989, on the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of McNeese, Robert Hebert formally adopted the motto "Excellence With a Personal Touch!" for the university; and

WHEREAS, Robert Hebert was a gifted individual and mentor to generations of college students, who were bolstered by his motivation and who strived to create successful lives and a better world; and

WHEREAS, he initiated higher academic standards that resulted in better ACT averages, improved student retention, and a rise in increased enrollment; and

WHEREAS, new campus construction and renovation projects included the addition of Hardtner Hall, Frasch Hall, the Shearman Fine Arts Center, and new dormitories; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Hebert foresaw the essential link between advanced educational opportunities and regional economics; he established the Banners Cultural Series to strengthened the vital link between McNeese and area industries; and

WHEREAS, he negotiated a partnership between the Southwest Louisiana Economic Development Alliance, the parish of Calcasieu, and the city of Lake Charles to establish the Southwest Louisiana Entrepreneurial and Economic Development Center (SEED) and placed this entrepreneurial research center on the university campus; and

WHEREAS, SEED became a focal point of expanding global economies fueled by escalating growth of local petrochemical, aviation, maritime, agricultural, gaming, and tourism businesses in Southwest Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Hebert worked diligently to increase private fundraising efforts and increased the assets of the McNeese Foundation from \$1 million to over \$55 million; this precipitated in the addition of eighty-four new endowed departmental chairs and professorships; and

WHEREAS, sometimes the mettle of a man is tested under the most horrific circumstances; in the aftermath of Hurricane Rita, nearly every building on campus sustained damages, with estimations at over \$30 million; and

WHEREAS, during the recovery period, Dr. Hebert exemplified self-reliance, altruism, and dedication; he and his team moved heaven and earth to make McNeese fully operational again, to re-establish classes just five weeks after the storm, and to successfully hold graduation exercises at the end of the fall semester 2005; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure at McNeese, Robert Hebert had a profound effect on students and faculty who were enlightened in some manner by his motivation; he shall

always be remembered for his tireless work ethic, his humor, his intellect, his enigmatic smile, and his genuine rapport with everyone he met; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Robert Hebert was a great ambassador for McNeese, an excellent faculty recruiter, and during his forty-one years at the university, was upheld to be one of its most beloved and well-respected professors; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Hebert shall be remembered as an extraordinary individual who loved to travel and immerse himself in the history and environs of far-off places; he was considered to be a larger than life figure who was always in search of the next adventure; he was an historian first, last, and always; and

WHEREAS, Robert is survived by his wife, the former Lilly Ann Vincent and their four sons, Greg, Chris, Gerry, and Edward; all his sons have completed their undergraduate degrees at McNeese and all have obtained medical doctorates; and

WHEREAS, Robert Hebert witnessed extraordinary advancements in learning opportunities; he shared his years of invaluable knowledge and experience with others; he proved himself to be a man of many talents, a man of his word, and a man whose dedication to scholarship has been a priceless gift left to the state of Louisiana.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express heartfelt condolences upon the passing of Dr. Robert Hebert, former president of McNeese State University.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby acknowledge the legacy and the lifetime of dedication to academic excellence forged by Dr. Robert Hebert on behalf of the betterment of public education and scholarship in the state of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the family of Dr. Robert Hebert.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES