

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 3

BY SENATORS TARVER AND PEACOCK

A RESOLUTION

To commend *The Shreveport Sun*, its owners, editors, and staff, on the occasion of its one hundredth anniversary and to acknowledge its exemplary status as the oldest black weekly newspaper in the state of Louisiana.

WHEREAS, the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana proudly acknowledges *The Shreveport Sun* as a significant news media publishing outlet and as an effective agent for change in the Ark-La-Tex region; and

WHEREAS, *The Shreveport Sun* shares the spotlight with notable African-American publications, both past and present; each played a major role in local politics and business affairs within their respective communities; these publications include the *Louisiana Weekly* (New Orleans), the *Chicago Defender*, the *Richmond Planet*, the *Chicago Bee*, the *Miami Times*, the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the *Roanoke Tribune*, the *Philadelphia Tribune*, the *Atlanta Daily World*, and the *Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder*; and

WHEREAS, in 1920, Melvin Lee (M.L.) Collins Sr., an educator and a steadfast man of vision, founded the weekly newspaper, *The Shreveport Sun*, the first of its kind in the community, as he sought to provide a medium against the racial oppression of the time and to provide a venue for acknowledgment of the achievements and social activities of African-Americans, who had little representation in mainstream media; and

WHEREAS, he published the news events of an under-served constituency, from birth to marriage, then onto passage from life and dismissal, *The Shreveport Sun* acknowledged the happenings of African-American society and voiced the issues of civil rights, literacy, and economic development that included the advertisement and promotion of minority professionals and business interests; and

WHEREAS, in the beginning, *The Shreveport Sun* served both urban and rural

readerships throughout North Louisiana and portions of nearby Texas and Arkansas, being sold for a nickel per copy in grocery stores, on street corners by newsboys, and later by door-to-door solicitations for subscriptions; the *Sun* paved the way for more minority-owned publications in the state; and

WHEREAS, today, *The Shreveport Sun* enjoys both national and international circulation; and

WHEREAS, from its humble origin located in the heart of the Avenue Business District, the *Sun* survived financially on advertisement space sold to small, minority-owned businesses such as physicians, dentists, funeral homes, and merchants; and

WHEREAS, the *Sun* survived overt opposition and threats through the sheer courage, conviction, pride, and stubbornness of Mr. M. L. Collins Sr.; and

WHEREAS, his legacy remains one of enlightenment and hope; and

WHEREAS, in its illustrious history, the *Sun* glistens with numerous journalism and public service awards including the Ann Brewster Award for outstanding journalism, the African American Arts Council patron of the arts award, and recognition as the second oldest minority-owned business in continuous operation in the Shreveport area; and

WHEREAS, *The Shreveport Sun* marks November 6, 2020, as its one hundredth anniversary and celebrates over five thousand editions having missed only one due to a disabled printing press; and

WHEREAS, during the turbulent 1960s as voting issues and civil rights emerged as major factors in African-American life, the *Sun* was at the forefront to offer up concise journalism and perspective; and

WHEREAS, in 1962, Melvin Lee Collins Jr., assumed the mantle of editorial responsibility from his father and continued in his footsteps to protect and support freedom of speech until 1983; and

WHEREAS, Sonya Collins Landry, daughter of M. L. Collins Jr., ascended to her leadership role as publisher and editor-in-chief in 1983 and her tenure has wrought continued progress and prosperity for the newspaper; and

WHEREAS, *The Shreveport Sun* was founded on November 6, 1920, and its golden anniversary theme is "2020 Vision"; and

WHEREAS, in anticipation of this most auspicious event, the *Sun* and Shreve Memorial Library have partnered to present the Black History Month 2020 Lecture Series throughout the month of February; and

WHEREAS, these lecturers shall discuss different aspects of African-American history and create a forum for the exchange of ideas and goals for continued growth within the community; the populace of Caddo Parish looks forward to a brighter future with expanded cultural horizons and economic possibilities; and

WHEREAS, the credo of minority publishing has stood the test of time and rings true in today's sociopolitical environment: *"The Black Press believes that America can best lead the world away from racial and national antagonism when it accords to every man, regardless of race, creed, or color, his human and legal rights; hating no man, fearing no man, the Black Press strives to help every man in the firm belief that all men are hurt as long as anyone is held back."*

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend and congratulate the owners, editors, and staff of *The Shreveport Sun* for its good works, extraordinary journalism, and integrity, and does hereby recognize its lengthy history of service to the community of Shreveport as an agent for positive change.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Sonya Collins Landry of *The Shreveport Sun*.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE