

2022 First Extraordinary Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 6

BY SENATOR WOMACK

CONDOLENCES. Expresses sincere and heartfelt condolences upon the death of Sammy J. Franklin.

A RESOLUTION

To express the sincere condolences of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the death of Sammy Jones Franklin.

WHEREAS, it is with deep regret and profound sorrow that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana has learned of the passing of a great gentleman and family patriarch, Sammy Jones Franklin, in Jena, Louisiana, on January 28, 2022, at the age of eighty-one years; and

WHEREAS, Sammy J. Franklin was born on May 24, 1940, in Jigger, Louisiana, to Charlie Franklin and Alice Wall Franklin; and

WHEREAS, for fifty-four years, he was the owner, publisher, and editor of *The Jena Times Olla-Tullos-Urania Signal*, the official journal for LaSalle Parish, a job that he loved as much as life itself; and

WHEREAS, Sammy embarked at a young age on what would become his lifelong passion, starting as a paper boy in Caldwell Parish, and joining the staff of *The Caldwell Watchman* by the time he was enrolled at Columbia High School; and

WHEREAS, upon graduating in 1958, he worked full-time as a reporter and photographer, honing his craft over the next ten years, and igniting inside himself the dream to one day own his very own newspaper; and

1 WHEREAS, that dream was realized on January 1, 1968, when Sammy officially
2 took over the operation of two newspapers, *The Jena Times* and the *Olla-Tullos Signal*,
3 which would be combined within a year as *The Jena Times Olla-Tullos-Signal*; and

4 WHEREAS, in the succeeding years, he continued to improve the newspaper's
5 quality, adding full color pictures and eventually updating for the digital age; and

6 WHEREAS, while many small-town weekly newspapers closed or drastically
7 reduced their sizes over the past half-century, *The Jena Times* continued to grow under
8 Sammy's stalwart leadership; and

9 WHEREAS, in keeping with Sammy's belief that, in order to have a successful
10 newspaper, the publisher and editor must become a part of the community that the paper
11 serves, he was actively involved in many church and civic clubs and organizations; and

12 WHEREAS, he helped organize the Jena Jaycees, which held the first Howdy
13 Neighbor Day; was an active member of the Jena Kiwanis Club; served a term on the Jena
14 Town Council, and as chairman of various committees and boards, including the LaSalle
15 Parish Library and LaSalle Parish Ambulance Board; spearheaded many other community
16 initiatives, including the first-ever Jena Nighttime Christmas Parade, first-ever outdoor Jena
17 High School graduation ceremony, and Jena Dixie Youth Baseball; and was instrumental in
18 various businesses deciding to locate in LaSalle Parish; and

19 WHEREAS, Sammy consistently promoted academics and athletics both in his
20 newspaper and as an avid fan, with his generous donations and involvement still positively
21 affecting young peoples' lives today; and

22 WHEREAS, his life revolved around his Savior, Jesus Christ, his family, his
23 newspaper, and doing everything he could for the betterment of LaSalle Parish; and

24 WHEREAS, Sammy was a long-time member of Temple Baptist Church, then
25 Midway Baptist Church, and served in various roles, including deacon, music minister, and
26 treasurer; and

27 WHEREAS, he loved old-time, four-part harmony Gospel music; at one time lending
28 his talents to a Gospel music group that sang in the area; and

29 WHEREAS, Sammy was a great fan of George Jones, and loved to play his music
30 and sing to family and employees of his newspaper, brightening the day of all who were

1 gifted with his performance; and

2 WHEREAS, he was an extraordinary husband, father, grandfather, and friend, who
3 is survived by his loving wife of forty-one years, Bonita Francis Franklin; two daughters,
4 Penny Justus and Ashley Keene (Dustin); four sons, Glen Franklin, Craig Franklin (Kim),
5 Scott Franklin and his fiancée Jamie Clauss, and Charlie Franklin (Marissa); eighteen
6 grandchildren; fourteen great-grandchildren; numerous nieces and nephews; a host of other
7 family and friends; and his beloved dogs, Molly and Mow; and

8 WHEREAS, the memory of Sammy J. Franklin will always remain in the hearts of
9 his family and friends who will forever reap the benefits of his lifetime of achievement; and

10 WHEREAS, Sammy represented all that is good about Louisiana as a man with
11 unique gifts and a charitable spirit, and with his passing, this state has lost one of its finest
12 citizens who left an indelible mark on the lives of the many individuals whom he touched
13 with his truly inspiring qualities and generosity, and who is now terribly missed but will
14 never be forgotten.

15 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana
16 does hereby extend its sincere and heartfelt condolences to the family of Sammy J. Franklin
17 upon the occasion of his death.

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does
19 hereby express its appreciation for Sammy J. Franklin's enduring contributions, which shall
20 long continue to be a source of deep honor for the town of Jena, LaSalle Parish, and the state
21 of Louisiana, and does hereby pay tribute to his remarkable legacy, which shall live long in
22 the hearts of those who were touched by his humanity.

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to
24 Bonita Francis Franklin.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Alden A. Clement Jr.

DIGEST

SR 6 Original

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