

2022 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 59

BY REPRESENTATIVES FIRMENT AND RISER AND SENATOR WOMACK

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To express the condolences of the Legislature on the death of Sammy Jones Franklin.

WHEREAS, it is with deep regret and profound sorrow that 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 own newspaper; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, he was an extraordinary husband, father, grandfather, and friend, who is survived by his loving wife of forty-one years, Bonita Francis Franklin; daughters, Penny Justus and Ashley Keene, and her husband Dustin; four sons, Glen Franklin, Craig Franklin, and his wife Kim, Scott Franklin, and his wife Jamie, and Charlie Franklin, and his wife Marissa; eighteen grandchildren; fourteen great-grandchildren; numerous nieces and nephews; and a host of other family and friends; and

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

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

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby extend its sincere and heartfelt condolences to the family of Sammy J. Franklin upon the occasion of his death, does hereby express its appreciation for Sammy J. Franklin's enduring contributions, which shall long continue to be a source of deep honor for the town of Jena, LaSalle Parish, and the state of Louisiana, and does hereby pay tribute to his remarkable legacy, which shall live long in the hearts of those who were touched by his humanity.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the family of Sammy J. Franklin.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE