

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 41

BY SENATOR FIELDS

A RESOLUTION

To commend Mr. Clarence Jones Jr. upon the occasion of his 80th birthday and being the founder and director of the local, national, and internationally recognized Heritage Festival of Negro Spirituals.

WHEREAS, as the oldest of nine children, he was born to Clarence Jones Sr. and Rosetta Gash Jones on April 21, 1943, on Utah Street in Berwick, Louisiana, and moved to Morgan City at the age of three; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Jones received a Bachelor of Arts in Vocal Music and a Master of Educational Leadership from Southern University (SU) and further certification from Louisiana State University (LSU); and

WHEREAS, the merging of Mr. Jones' hobbies (playing the piano and singing), his educational experiences, and his love for his Lord produced a versatile, gifted musician and educator whose performing, composing, and conducting skills would unquestionably document his reputation as an amazing artist; and

WHEREAS, in sharing his God-given blessings with others, he created a nonprofit professional choral ensemble in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, named the Heritage Festival of Negro Spirituals to perpetuate Negro Spirituals as a distinctive art form and to fulfill the need of restoring and preserving its legacy; and

WHEREAS, Negro Spirituals are the first indigenous musical form created by African slaves upon arriving on American shores which have been inspired by some memorable event or personality in the Bible; and

WHEREAS, the Negro Spiritual is valuable as music but also as a complete expression of a race to whom religion is a vital reality; and

WHEREAS, since 1991, on the first Saturday in February, the signature event has been the Annual Festival of Negro Spirituals at which local churches, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and various community choirs have participated; and

WHEREAS, this annual event has been hosted at Mt. Zion First Baptist Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, Heritage Festival of Negro Spirituals' slogan, "No place or audience has been too large or small, too near or far for us to perform", has resulted in them performing before a plethora of local, national, and international audiences, such as various venues throughout Louisiana; Chicago, IL; Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, PA; Atlanta, GA; Hampton, VA; Mexico City, Mexico; Paris, France; the America Church in Paris; in England; and before Pope John Paul II; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Jones' career has been full of accomplishments; he is most proud of his family, being a loving husband, father, grandfather, and brother; and

WHEREAS, we celebrate and cherish Mr. Clarence Jones Jr. for sharing his eighty years of life through his music, education, and Negro Spirituals which are an eloquent expression of human experiences.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend Mr. Clarence Jones Jr. upon the occasion of his 80th birthday and for being the founder and director of the Heritage Festival of Negro Spirituals, and hereby record for posterity his God given gift of music which he shared with all who would listen.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Mr. Clarence Jones Jr.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE