

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 89

BY SENATOR CORTEZ

A RESOLUTION

To commend and congratulate Will Sentell on the occasion of his retirement from a distinguished career in journalism.

WHEREAS, Will Sentell was born in Corpus Christi, Texas, the second of three children born to Bill and Nancy Sentell; and

WHEREAS, Will Sentell was raised in Shreveport, Louisiana, and proudly attended C.E. Byrd High School; and

WHEREAS, upon high school graduation, he attended Louisiana State University (LSU) in Baton Rouge where he studied journalism and worked at *The Daily Reveille* newspaper, where his colleagues included John LaPlante and Randy McClain, both of whom later became his coworkers at *The Advocate* and Will's good friends; and

WHEREAS, Will has had a distinguished career in journalism, spending forty-nine years as a statehouse reporter across four states, tracking legislative sessions, political campaigns, and the workings of state government; and

WHEREAS, Will covered eleven governors across his career including Mike Foster, Kathleen Blanco, Bobby Jindal, and John Bel Edwards in Louisiana; Bill Waller and Cliff Finch in Mississippi; Davie Boren and George Nigh in Oklahoma; and Christopher Bond, John Ashcroft, and Mel Carnahan in Missouri; and

WHEREAS, Will Sentell's first job in journalism was at the *Jackson Daily News* in Jackson, Mississippi, in 1975 and, a year later, he moved to Oklahoma to work for the *Oklahoma Journal* and then the *Tulsa Tribune*; and

WHEREAS, while in Oklahoma on election day in 1978, as he covered the United States Senate race, Will met Donna, the love of his life, and they were married in May 1979; and

WHEREAS, Will and his wife Donna moved to Jefferson City, Missouri, in 1981, where he worked with distinction at the *Kansas City Star* for nineteen years; and

WHEREAS, Will's longest tenure as a reporter came at *The Advocate* newspaper in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, to get the job in 2000, Will submitted an email describing his connection to Louisiana and his interest in a Capitol Bureau position; and

WHEREAS, the response to his email came from his former *Reveille* colleague, John LaPlante, who asked if "This is the same Will Sentell who went to LSU?"; and

WHEREAS, Will was hired in April 2000 and was able to work again with his *Reveille* coworkers, John LaPlante and Randy McClain; and

WHEREAS, Will spent twenty-three years at *The Advocate*, covering public education and transportation issues; he became such an expert of these subjects that other reporters, advocates, and political watchers routinely sought information from him, and he served as a mentor to many who passed through the offices of Press Row at the Louisiana State Capitol; and

WHEREAS, Will was always generous with his time, checked in on his colleagues, offered guidance to new journalists, and worked the long hours of a statehouse reporter with kindness and grace; and

WHEREAS, Will loved to discuss the latest news and scores for LSU football and often could be found during downtime in his office or on the floor in the house or senate chambers checking out football message boards for the latest gossip about the team and its coaches; and

WHEREAS, once his adored granddaughter was born, Will loved to trade stories with lawmakers and colleagues about their children and grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Will is known among those he covered and those who watched his work as a fair reporter and a straight shooter who spent hours sitting in education and transportation hearings to understand the perspectives of all sides; he worked humbly, never drawing attention to himself while explaining complex issues with ease; and

WHEREAS, Will retired from *The Advocate* on March 31, 2023, and he left the Louisiana Capitol as he had worked during his long journalism career: seeking little attention or fanfare, even working on a story on his last day in the office while people stopped by to celebrate his long career; and

WHEREAS, at his core, Will is a devoted family man, kind person, and dedicated friend; and

WHEREAS, Will and Donna have two grown sons, William (wife Kristen) and Jeffrey, and a granddaughter, Victoria Alyse; and

WHEREAS, Will loves running, biking, reading, baseball, LSU football, and doting on Victoria; he is a devoted Catholic who attends Saint Aloysius Catholic Church and assists with altar set-ups at weekday and Saturday afternoon masses.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend and congratulate Will Sentell on the occasion of his retirement from a distinguished career in journalism.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Will Sentell.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE