

2023 Regular Session

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 53

BY SENATORS ALLAIN AND CORTEZ

CONDOLENCES. Expresses sincere and heartfelt condolences of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the passing of Jimmy "Jim" Foster Harris.

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 To express the sincere condolences of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the passing of
3 Jimmy "Jim" Foster Harris and to recognize his many outstanding achievements.

4 WHEREAS, it is with tremendous sadness and profound regret that the Legislature
5 of Louisiana has learned of the passing, on May 8, 2023, of Jimmy "Jim" Foster Harris; and

6 WHEREAS, Jim was born on June 8, 1945, in Mountain Grove, Missouri, to Ursel
7 and Foster Harris; and

8 WHEREAS, at the age of thirteen, Jim moved with his family to New Orleans,
9 Louisiana, for two years before settling down in Franklin, Louisiana; and

10 WHEREAS, while still in high school, Jim traveled to Houston to obtain a
11 broadcasting license to fulfill his dream of reporting the news over the airwaves, and landed
12 a job at KFRA-AM radio as a disc jockey; and

13 WHEREAS, Jim's silky smooth delivery style combined with an ear for the news
14 made him a noted radio journalist as a very young man; and

15 WHEREAS, Jim attended the University of Southwestern Louisiana part-time and
16 continued to sharpen his media skills as the news director for KPEL-AM radio while also
17 serving in the United States Army Reserve for six years; and

18 WHEREAS, Jim's journalistic talent and booming voice led him to a job opportunity

1 at WJBO-AM radio in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where he created and hosted the
2 award-winning interview program "Topic Today"; and

3 WHEREAS, in one year as news director at WJBO-AM he garnered eleven
4 Associated Press and United Press International awards; and

5 WHEREAS, Jim's immense talent caught the attention of Louisiana political and
6 public relations icon Gus Weill who offered Jim the position of press secretary for Governor
7 Edwin Edwards' re-election campaign in 1975; and

8 WHEREAS, Jim was responsible for managing Governor Edwin Edwards'
9 relationship with the media and shaping his public image – a challenge well documented in
10 political lore; and

11 WHEREAS, Jim went on to work in a number of roles in the second term of
12 Governor Edwin Edwards, serving in the Department of Transportation and Development
13 and Department of Health and Human Services, and cut his teeth on environmental policy
14 serving on the former Louisiana Environmental Control Commission; and

15 WHEREAS, Jim continued his career in politics and public service as the campaign
16 manager for Lt. Governor Jimmy Fitzmorris' run for governor in 1979 and as Assistant
17 Secretary of the Office of Commerce and Industry for Governor Dave Treen; and

18 WHEREAS, Jim served as the Executive Director of the Louisiana World
19 Exposition, also known as the Louisiana World's Fair, held in New Orleans in 1984,
20 resulting in a huge impact for the city of New Orleans and Louisiana and attracting many
21 visitors showcasing Louisiana's culture, industry, and heritage to the world; and

22 WHEREAS, Jim founded Harris, Fischer & Associates in 1984, which became Harris
23 & Associates in 1986, and finally Harris, DeVille & Associates in 1993, working with
24 Renwick DeVille to grow a two-person firm into a team of over twenty persons managing
25 issues for a client base that includes numerous Fortune 100 companies; and

26 WHEREAS, Harris, DeVille & Associates has provided communications and
27 governmental relations stewardship of billions of dollars of new investments in Louisiana
28 and along the United States Gulf Coast; and

29 WHEREAS, in 2022, Jim and his Harris, DeVille & Associates family were awarded
30 the Legal Reform Champion Award by the United States Institute for Legal Reform; and

1 WHEREAS, Jim was a pioneer in the issues management and public affairs field and
2 set the standard for trusted and effective communications on behalf of his clients; and

3 WHEREAS, Jim was a trustworthy advisor and provided counsel to seven Louisiana
4 governors, hundreds of Louisiana legislators, and countless parish and local officials; and

5 WHEREAS, Jim was considered a giant in the governmental affairs community who
6 always conducted himself in a calm, ethical, and gentlemanly manner; and

7 WHEREAS, Jim was a wise and kind mentor to dozens of current members of the
8 Louisiana governmental affairs society, always happy to provide advice and direction; and

9 WHEREAS, Jim had a great interest in Winston Churchill and British culture and
10 lived by the famous English slogan, "Keep Calm and Carry On"; and

11 WHEREAS, Jim was a voracious reader, loved all music, a great cup of chicory
12 coffee, and always dressed impeccably regardless of the situation or setting; and

13 WHEREAS, Jim believed in sticking to the facts and pressing forward knowing that
14 truth would prevail even against the greatest odds; and

15 WHEREAS, Jim was a true patriarch to all who needed him by reassuring them that
16 everything would be all right as long as we kept pushing forward; and

17 WHEREAS, Jim pushed on until the very end of his days with strength and grace,
18 and even after his ALS diagnosis and inability to talk, he continued working as best he could
19 and was passionately devoted to helping his Harris, DeVille & Associates family for as long
20 as possible; and

21 WHEREAS, Jim was a proud husband, father, grandfather, and brother, and is
22 survived by his loving wife of 49 years Linda Harris, his daughter Sydney Harris Stormer,
23 son-in-law Tim Stormer, son Jake Harris, grandson Hudson Harris Stormer, sister Susan
24 Soprano-Auburn, and brother-in-law Ken Auburn; and

25 WHEREAS, Jim will be deeply missed by his family, friends, and all who knew him;
26 and

27 WHEREAS, Jim was a master at his craft and a true Louisiana legend who will
28 always be remembered for his presence, wisdom, charm, love, and quiet benevolence; and

29 WHEREAS, Jim loved Louisiana and left our great state better than he found it by
30 leaving a mark on our hearts and minds that will last forever.

