

2023 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 130

BY REPRESENTATIVE COUSSAN AND SENATORS BOUDREAUX AND CORTEZ

COMMENDATIONS: Commends Dr. Walter Benoit Comeaux, Jr., on the occasion of his one hundredth birthday

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 To commend Dr. Walter Benoit Comeaux, Jr., on the occasion of his one hundredth
3 birthday.

4 WHEREAS, Dr. Comeaux was born in Houma, Louisiana, on April 10, 1923; as a
5 boy, he spent his summers south of Houma drying shrimp and later worked in a lumberyard
6 that specialized in drilling mud and heavy timber; although his early work experience
7 consisted of blue collar jobs, he inherited his dentist father's scientific curiosity and
8 possessed a natural inclination to study medicine; and

9 WHEREAS, Dr. Comeaux attended Louisiana State University on a band scholarship
10 and joined the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC); upon completing his
11 undergraduate studies and four years of ROTC, he was made a private in the Army infantry
12 and assigned to the LSU Medical School in New Orleans; he graduated from medical school
13 on March 13, 1946, received surgical training through an internship program, and completed
14 a three-month course required for all medical officers; and

15 WHEREAS, after completing his medical education and training, Dr. Comeaux was
16 assigned to the South-East Asian Theater of World War II at the 49th General Hospital in
17 Tokyo, the only general hospital in Japan; he served the entirety of his overseas duty at this
18 hospital, which handled all serious cases from Japan, China, Korea, and Guam, while having
19 only three general surgeons and fifteen fellow medical officers to assist him; the relatively
20 small team of dedicated doctors took on unimaginable challenges with honor and

1 accomplished incredible feats, such as completing nine thousand six hundred thirty-one
2 operative procedures in a single year; and

3 WHEREAS, while serving in Japan, Dr. Comeaux met Dorinne Kennedy, a
4 Canadian-born civilian-worker for the United States Air Force Intelligence Department, and
5 the two were married in the chapel of the 49th General Hospital in February 1949; and

6 WHEREAS, Dr. Comeaux was honorably discharged in 1949 and returned to the
7 United States to live in New Orleans, where he worked as an admitting physician at Charity
8 Hospital for thirteen months before taking a residency in general and thoracic surgery; and

9 WHEREAS, after completing his residency and passing the American Board of
10 Surgery exams, Dr. Comeaux and his wife moved to Lafayette, Louisiana, where he
11 established himself as a renowned general surgeon and pillar of the community who touched
12 the lives of thousands of patients during his nearly sixty years of practice; he served on
13 numerous philanthropic and foundation boards, including the Louisiana State University and
14 University of Louisiana at Lafayette Foundation boards, and he remains an avid supporter
15 of the Southwest Louisiana Mardi Gras Association and the Krewe of Gabriel over which
16 he reigned as King Gabriel XXXV in 1974; and

17 WHEREAS, Dr. Comeaux is an avid outdoorsman and nature conservationist who
18 cherished fishing and duck hunting throughout his life; he even had the opportunity to hunt
19 big game on multiple continents; and

20 WHEREAS, despite dedicating himself to the study and practice of medicine, Dr.
21 Comeaux has been fascinated by aviation since his youth visiting the Houma hangar to listen
22 to the conversations of traveling barnstormers; he rediscovered his passion for aviation in
23 the early 1960s, and by 1968, he completed his first solo flight to earn a pilot's license; and

24 WHEREAS, Dr. Comeaux worked as the senior Aviation Medical Examiner and
25 flight surgeon for Petroleum Helicopters, Inc. (PHI), he became involved with Helicopter
26 Association International (HAI), then-named the Helicopter Association of America, through
27 his work with PHI; and

28 WHEREAS, Dr. Comeaux continued his service with HAI as a critically important
29 member and chair of the safety committee from 1978 until 1985; he was an instrumental

1 force in the development of the first edition of the HAI Safety Manual; he also served as a
2 special advisor to the HAI board of directors from 1985 until 1998; and

3 WHEREAS, while serving HAI, Dr. Comeaux received numerous awards including
4 the Joe Mashman Safety Award, the Lawrence D. Bell Memorial Award, and the Igor I.
5 Sikorsky Award for Humanitarian Service; and

6 WHEREAS, Dr. Walter Benoit Comeaux, Jr., is a truly incredible individual who
7 dedicated his professional life to the protection of others; he honorably served his country
8 overseas and saw to the treatment of countless individuals while working in Tokyo, and he
9 continued saving lives not only by serving as a surgeon in hospitals and on flights, but also
10 by improving safety practices throughout the rotorcraft industry; he is most deserving of the
11 highest recognition on the occasion of his one hundredth birthday.

12 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
13 commend Dr. Walter Benoit Comeaux, Jr., on the occasion of his one hundredth birthday;
14 does hereby further recognize Dr. Comeaux for his valiant military service, dedication to the
15 practice of medicine, and efforts to improve rotorcraft safety; and does hereby extend
16 sincerest wishes that he continue to prosper and enjoy good health, for he is one of
17 Louisiana's most cherished sons.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HCR 130 Original

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Commends Dr. Walter Benoit Comeaux, Jr., on the occasion of his 100th birthday.