

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 126

BY SENATORS CORTEZ, ABRAHAM, ALLAIN, BARROW, BERNARD, BOUDREAUX, BOUIE, CARTER, CATHEY, CLOUD, CONNICK, DUPLESSIS, FESI, FIELDS, FOIL, HARRIS, HENRY, HENSGENS, HEWITT, JACKSON, KLEINPETER, LAMBERT, LUNEAU, MCMATH, MILLIGAN, ROBERT MILLS, MIZELL, MORRIS, PEACOCK, POPE, PRICE, REESE, SMITH, STINE, TALBOT, TARVER, WHITE AND WOMACK

A RESOLUTION

To commend the Honorable Fred H. Mills Jr. on twenty-three years of distinguished public service to the state of Louisiana and to express heartfelt gratitude for the kindness, compassion, intellect, humor, and statesmanship he brought to the Louisiana State Capitol.

WHEREAS, Fred H. Mills Jr. was born and raised in Breaux Bridge, Louisiana, into a family deeply rooted in faith, hard work, and public service; and

WHEREAS, his father, Fred H. Mills Sr., was the mayor of Breaux Bridge for most of the 1970s and was regarded by everyone as a man of great respectability; and

WHEREAS, Fred H. Mills Sr. was an exemplary role model for his son on how to use the great privilege of being a public servant to treat people with respect and kindness to achieve a benefit for all; and

WHEREAS, Senator Mills is considered the flesh-and-blood replica of his immensely respected late father and is a perfect reflection of the character and integrity imparted upon him by his late mother, Mary Alice Mills, who instilled in her son the importance of responsibility, hard work, prayerfulness, and thankfulness; and

WHEREAS, Senator Mills graduated from Breaux Bridge High School and the University of Louisiana at Monroe, College of Pharmacy, and in 1981, at the young age of twenty-six, opened his own pharmacy, Mills Cashway Pharmacy in Parks, Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, as a licensed pharmacist he was a pioneer in the development of pharmaceutical delivery and grew his small community pharmacy throughout all of rural St. Martin Parish long before the internet or home delivery of any commodity was considered mainstream; and

WHEREAS, his hilarious commercials for Mills Cashway Pharmacy garnered him several national awards for creative advertising, but his intention was greater than just

making people laugh, it was to draw people into the pharmacy so he could help them properly take their medications, manage their chronic conditions, and help improve the quality of life of the people in his community; and

WHEREAS, he also served as the executive director for the Louisiana Board of Pharmacy, and during his tenure he was responsible for the complete rewrite and modernization of the Pharmacy Practice Act to better utilize the skills and expertise of the pharmacist in the patient continuum of care; and

WHEREAS, during the devastating aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Senator Mills was tapped by Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco to be the state lead on the monumental task of managing the Strategic National Stockpile federal repository of antibiotics, vaccines, chemical antidotes, antitoxins, and other critical medical supplies being brought into the state; overseeing a process to reunite patients, many of whom were dispersed throughout the United States, with critical medications and supplies that were lost following the catastrophic destruction of pharmacies and pharmacy records at a time before access to electronic patient records was common; and rallying the pharmacy community to continue to provide medications without payment for many months until he was able to wear down the bureaucrats at the Federal Emergency Management Agency to finally issue reimbursement; and

WHEREAS, in addition to being a pharmacist, Senator Mills has been on the Board of Directors of Farmers Merchants Bank and Trust and has served as the president and CEO of the bank for the past twenty-two years; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure as president and CEO, he significantly grew bank assets, expanded to six branches in three parishes, managed over one hundred employees, bolstered the commercial book of business significantly, and led the bank through major technological advancements, and still today, he continues to guide his employees through the rapidly changing style of banking demanded by consumers; and

WHEREAS, Senator Mills began his political career in 2000, being elected to the St. Martin Parish Council, where he served until 2007; and

WHEREAS, as a councilman he not only used his expertise in the realm of health care and banking to better serve his community, but was immediately indoctrinated into the

daily struggles of people regarding roads, bridges, sewer, water, drainage, flooding, schools, taxes, and so many other issues that would shape his entire political career; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, he was elected to represent the people of Louisiana House of Representatives District No. 46, and was immediately recognized for his captivating ability as a freshman legislator to tackle hard issues head-on while remaining respectful of both sides of the debate; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, he was elected to represent the people of Iberia, Lafayette, St. Landry, and St. Martin parishes when the seat for Louisiana Senate District No. 22 was vacated and quickly established himself as an exceptional resource on the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare and the Senate Committee on Finance; and

WHEREAS, he was reelected without opposition in 2015 and was appointed by Senate President John Alario to serve as the chairman of the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare during the 2016 to 2020 term, overseeing the physical, behavioral, and social healthcare policy and legislative directives governing the residents of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, Senator Mills was reelected again without opposition in 2019, and in January 2020, Senate President Patrick "Page" Cortez reappointed him to continue serving as chairman of the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare and also appointed him as Senate Parliamentarian; and

WHEREAS, in addition to serving at one time on nearly every Senate standing committee, Senator Mills has served on numerous public and private boards and commissions including the Acadian Ambulance Board of Directors for over fifteen years, the St. Martin Economic Development Authority (SMEDA) for over thirty years as a founding member and current president and CEO, and the Board of Directors for the St. Martin Parish Hospital Service District for over forty years; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure as a state legislator he has authored significant legislation impacting the areas of health care, human service districts, safe drinking water, local sewerage systems, behavioral health care, access to physical therapy, medical marijuana, pharmacy benefit managers, Medicaid managed care, taxation, professional and occupational health licensing boards, and the opioid crisis, to name just a few; and

WHEREAS, during his time as a state legislator, he helped the residents of this state

recover not only from the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, but also from many other hurricanes, floods, and natural and manmade disasters to have befallen this state; and

WHEREAS, despite the optimism of the new term and new decade that was starting in 2020, Senator Mills, like the rest of the world, was thrown into the global COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, he worked tirelessly to help the people of his district and this state access state and federal resources available to cope with the abrupt and unprecedented disruption of life as it was known prior to March 2020; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the turmoil COVID-19 caused at his pharmacy and bank that demanded his attention, he never hesitated to tap every resource available to help his constituents in need, much like he always has based on the example set by his father; and

WHEREAS, Senator Mills has always approached his responsibility as a public servant in a way that exemplifies the goodness of government and all that can be accomplished to help people, as opposed to the volatility of politics, which if left unchecked can be hurtful and divisive; and

WHEREAS, he has always been a man of the people committed to the people, treating everyone who approached him as a friend with the same respect no matter how big or small their voices were; and

WHEREAS, his legislative assistant, Ms. Yvette Greig, has been his trusted assistant and voice of compassion since he was first elected to public office in 2000; and

WHEREAS, he often uses humor to diffuse tense situations in meetings or committee hearings, but he has never disregarded or minimized the positions of people who meet with him or testify before his committee; and

WHEREAS, Senator Mills is the most humble of politicians, a true gentleman and statesman, who has set the bar extremely high for those who follow in his footsteps; and

WHEREAS, his wisdom, decorum, and ability to be a steadfast legislative leader will be sorely missed by every legislator who has had the honor of serving with him, by all of the staff who have had the privilege of working with him, by all of the lobbyists who have been able to rely on him, by the residents of this state who have benefitted from his heroic efforts on their behalf, and most importantly, by the people of Senate District 22 who have had the

most loyal of champions fighting on their behalf; and

WHEREAS, although Senator Mills has reached the end of his final term in the Louisiana Legislature, there is no doubt that whatever lies ahead for him in the next chapter of his life he will continue to be profoundly impactful on those around him because that is simply the kind of man that he is, and always will be, even without a political title to his name.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend and congratulate the Honorable Fred H. Mills Jr. on twenty-three years of distinguished public service to the state of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express heartfelt gratitude to Senator Mills for setting a standard of character and integrity founded on kindness, compassion, intellect, humor, and statesmanship that everyone who walks the halls of this great capitol should emulate.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby extend to Senator Mills the most sincere wishes for many years of success and happiness in all of his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the Honorable Fred H. Mills Jr.

---

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE