

1 received a juris doctorate degree in 1963; he was admitted to the Louisiana State Bar in 1964
2 and began a law practice in Leesville; and

3 WHEREAS, Buddy combined a gentlemanly demeanor with a relatable background
4 to win four state legislative elections and one congressional election; he was first elected to
5 represent the parishes of Allen, Beauregard, and Vernon as a member of the Louisiana
6 House of Representatives in 1968, during his first term; and

7 WHEREAS, after winning reelection in 1972, Buddy leveraged his uncanny ability
8 to process large amounts of information to earn himself the role of chair of the tax-writing
9 ways and means committee; his no-nonsense approach as chairman was well known in the
10 capitol, and his management of committee meetings was renowned; in 1978 he was elected
11 to the United States Congress representing the 4th congressional district; in 1983, he was
12 elected to the Louisiana House of Representatives for his fourth term; and

13 WHEREAS, during his service as a state legislator, Buddy ushered in great
14 advancements for his home district and the state of Louisiana, most notably ensuring that
15 U.S. Highway 171 received critical prioritization and became the primary four-lane corridor
16 between Shreveport and Lake Charles; from 2010 until 2012, he served as chairman of the
17 Democratic Party in the state of Louisiana, and he remained active in party politics for the
18 entirety of his life; and

19 WHEREAS, in addition to his political and legal careers, Buddy was an
20 exceptionally successful businessman; at the urging of his beloved wife, Laura, he took a
21 proactive role in the management of his family business, Sweetlake Land and Oil Company
22 in Cameron and Calcasieu parishes; in 1987, his vision and steady leadership resulted in
23 great benefits for the state of Louisiana and the growth of the oil and gas industry in
24 Louisiana; his passion to help Louisiana and her people resulted in the discovery of the then-
25 largest natural gas field in North America and a long-overdue economic expansion and
26 employment boom in the southwest corner of the state; and

27 WHEREAS, Buddy's business and legal acumen led him to support ventures such
28 as the development of Indigo Hotel and the Kress-Levy building in downtown Baton Rouge,
29 facilitating the economic expansion of the capitol city; he expanded Sweet Lake's cattle herd
30 to become the largest in the state and continued to grow the company's rice-farming

1 operations; additionally, he oversaw the renovation of his old family camp into Grosse
2 Savanne Lodge, one of the nation's premier fishing and waterfowl hunting destinations; and

3 WHEREAS, for over forty years, Buddy served on the board of Leesville-based
4 Merchants & Farmers Bank, including nineteen as chairman; during his service, the bank's
5 assets grew from \$20 million to \$500 million, and the bank expanded into the Lake Charles
6 market where it was recognized as one of the top community banks in the state; and

7 WHEREAS, as a component of his lifetime of service, Mr. Leach was also a member
8 of the Leesville Club for more than fifty years, volunteering countless hours and resources
9 to the camp's principal charity, the Lions Camps for Children in Vernon Parish; he was also
10 a lifelong member of the Masonic Lodge of Slagle; Mr. Leach was a devout Christian and
11 an active member of Polk Memorial and Church of the Good Shepherd Episcopal churches
12 in Leesville and Lake Charles respectively; and

13 WHEREAS, Anthony Claude "Buddy" Leach, Jr., leaves to cherish his memory his
14 wife, Laura; his children, Mary Werner, Lucy Davenport, and Claude Leach; nine beloved
15 grandchildren; two treasured sisters; and numerous other relatives who loved and admired
16 him; he will be deeply missed, but his extraordinary legacy of service to the state of
17 Louisiana will live on forever.

18 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
19 express heartfelt condolences on the death of former Louisiana State Representative and U.S.
20 Congressman Anthony Claude "Buddy" Leach, Jr., and does hereby extend sincerest wishes
21 that his family, friends, former colleagues, and loved ones find comfort in their shared
22 memories of his life.

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)]

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2023 Regular Session

Charles Owen

Expresses the condolences of the legislature on the death of former La. State Representative and U.S. Congressman Buddy Leach.