

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 53

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

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express sincere and heartfelt condolences upon the passing of Jimmy "Jim" Foster Harris and does hereby recognize and record for posterity his many outstanding achievements.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Linda Harris, Sydney Harris Stormer, Jake Harris, Renwick DeVille, and Harris, DeVille & Associates.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES