

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 162

BY SENATORS LUNEAU, ABRAHAM, ALLAIN, BARROW, BASS, BOUDREAUX, BOUIE, CARTER, CATHEY, CLOUD, CONNICK, COUSSAN, DUPLESSIS, EDMONDS, FESI, FIELDS, FOIL, HARRIS, HENRY, HENSGENS, HODGES, JACKSON-ANDREWS, JENKINS, KLEINPETER, LAMBERT, MIGUEZ, MILLER, MIZELL, MORRIS, OWEN, PRESSLY, PRICE, REESE, SEABAUGH, STINE, TALBOT, WHEAT AND WOMACK

A RESOLUTION

To commend and recognize the outstanding contributions of Sharon Turcan Gahagan to the Louisiana School of Math, Science, and the Arts and to honor the dedication of the Sharon Turcan Gahagan Art Gallery.

WHEREAS, on May 18, 2024, the Sharon Turcan Gahagan Art Gallery was dedicated during the 40th Commencement Exercises of the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts (LSMSA); and

WHEREAS, the gallery was named in Sharon Gahagan's honor by the LSMSA Board of Directors in recognition of her unwavering commitment to education, her illustrious career, her dedication to her family, and her significant contributions to LSMSA; and

WHEREAS, Sharon was awarded an honorary Louisiana School diploma and was named Board Chair Emeritus, a first in LSMSA history, in a presentation led by LSMSA Executive Director Dr. Steven Horton; and

WHEREAS, Sharon served under six Louisiana governors and guided six executive directors, demonstrating her enduring dedication and exceptional leadership; and

WHEREAS, a native of Baton Rouge, Sharon earned a Bachelor of Science degree in speech and hearing therapy from Louisiana State University in 1968, and began her

distinguished career as a teacher at the Louisiana School for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired; and

WHEREAS, she furthered her education with a master's and specialist degrees from Northwestern State University and established and directed the Natchitoches/Northwestern Program for the Hearing Impaired before later entering private practice in speech and hearing therapy; and

WHEREAS, Sharon Gahagan significantly contributed to numerous civic organizations, including being a founding member of the Natchitoches ARC, a founding board member of the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame, and holding various leadership roles in the Natchitoches Service League, Natchitoches-Northwestern Symphony Society, Friends of Louisiana Public Broadcasting, and the Natchitoches Historic District Development Commission; and

WHEREAS, Sharon was named a Natchitoches Treasure by the City of Natchitoches in 2014 and she received the Natchitoches Chamber of Commerce Lifetime Achievement Award in 2020; and

WHEREAS, in 1989, Sharon was appointed to the LSMSA Board of Directors by Governor Buddy Roemer, and she served as chairperson from 1997 until her retirement in December 2023, advocating tirelessly for the completion of LSMSA's long-term master plan; and

WHEREAS, under her leadership, the construction of the 50,000-square-foot Center for Performance and Technology (CPT) was completed, housing the Sharon Turcan Gahagan Art Gallery, and she oversaw the restoration of the original Natchitoches Trade School building into the Music and Arts Building (MAB); and

WHEREAS, Sharon Gahagan's advocacy led to the funding and construction of the Living and Learning Commons (LLC), a 110,000-square-foot residential life center for LSMSA's students, with over \$40 million in state funds secured for these projects during her tenure; and

WHEREAS, Sharon and her husband, Henry Cole Gahagan Jr., are blessed with three children, Kristen Gahagan Weber, Henry Cole Gahagan III, and Jensen Gahagan Sessums, and six grandchildren.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend and recognize Sharon Turcan Gahagan for her outstanding contributions to the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts and to the state of Louisiana, and does hereby honor the dedication of the Sharon Turcan Gahagan Art Gallery in recognition of her legacy of service, leadership, and commitment to education.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Sharon Turcan Gahagan.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE