

Regular Session, 2013

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 123

BY REPRESENTATIVE BARROW

A RESOLUTION

To express the condolences of the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the death of Gerald Ray "Gerry" Lane, of Baton Rouge.

WHEREAS, on Friday, May 3, 2013, Baton Rouge businessman, resident, and philanthropist Gerald Ray "Gerry" Lane traveled to his eternal rest, departing from the company of family who stood by him; and

WHEREAS, the slogan, "You can count on Gerry Lane" typified not only Mr. Lane's commitment to his auto sales and service businesses, but spoke of his generosity to those less fortunate than he; and

WHEREAS, born on February 15, 1931, in Red Mount, Oklahoma, Mr. Lane was raised in the heart of Oklahoma's Dust Bowl during the Depression but he embraced the values of vision, hard work, and pursuing good ideas and sought his fortune in California; and

WHEREAS, in order to survive, Mr. Lane reluctantly took a job in San Diego as a car salesman, and on his first day at work, on June 3, 1953, at the tender age of twenty-two, Mr. Lane sold his first automobile; and

WHEREAS, three years later, Mr. Lane took a job selling cars at Capitol City Ford in Baton Rouge, and soon after being hired away from Capitol City Ford by Polk Chevrolet, Gerry Lane became the youngest automobile sales general manager in the country at the age of twenty-six; and

WHEREAS, frustrated at not being able to obtain ownership of an automobile business in Baton Rouge, in 1966 Gerry Lane seized the opportunity to purchase a failing dealership in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, and made it a success within a year; and

WHEREAS, after having duplicated his automobile dealership success in Pascagoula, Gulfport, and Lucedale, Mississippi, and in Gonzales, Louisiana, Gerry Lane took advantage of the chance to return to his beloved Baton Rouge when his mentor Herb Polk, the owner of Polk Chevrolet, was ready to sell his dealership; and

WHEREAS, under the name of Gerry Lane Chevrolet, Gerry Lane guided the former Polk Chevrolet, which was thirteenth in the Baton Rouge automotive sales market prior to his purchase of the franchise, to become the number one selling automobile dealership in the market; and

WHEREAS, one of Gerry Lane's many impressive gifts was his willingness to share the lessons he had learned in sixty years of car sales; Mr. Lane is estimated to have hired and trained five thousand salespeople and three thousand managers; and

WHEREAS Gerry Lane received an abundance of awards in his business life, including *Time* magazine's Dealer of the Year; the National Lifetime Achievement Award from General Motors Acceptance Corporation; District Dealer of the Year, an award he won four times; the *Business Report* Executive of the Year Award; the Pete Goldsby Award from the American Advertising Federation; and the Better Business Bureau's Douglas Manship Sr. Torch Award for professional ethics; and

WHEREAS, as a monument to his unwavering support of Louisiana State University men's baseball, a bronze plaque honoring Mr. Lane has been placed in Gerry Lane Championship Plaza at Alex Box Stadium on the Louisiana State University campus in Baton Rouge; and

WHEREAS, Gerry Lane was known for his penchant for giving to others, and instilled in his family and employees the value of contributing to the local community, chief among them the YMCA of the Capital Area, which received for its youth sports programs a significant portion of the nearly thirty million dollars Gerry Lane and his family donated to local charities and organizations, including the March of Dimes, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Arc of Baton Rouge, and Louisiana State University's Rural Life Museum; and

WHEREAS, as a former rodeo rider, Gerry Lane saw fit to become an annual sponsor of the Angola Rodeo, beginning in 1970, and often offered jobs to inmates upon their release from prison, sharing with them his philosophy that hard work produces fruitful results; and

WHEREAS, the remarkable life of this longtime Baton Rouge personality has been chronicled by author Leo Honeycutt in a biography entitled, "Gerry Lane: An American Success Story"; and

WHEREAS, Gerald Ray "Gerry" Lane will be sorely missed yet fondly remembered by his wife of fifty-five years, Faye Rogan Lane, his sons, David and wife Cindy, and Eric and wife Lisa, his daughter Sandra, and family, friends, and employees of the many facets of the crown that is Lane Enterprises, to which he lent his life and created a legacy that is certain to endure in the years to come.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the members of the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana do hereby extend earnest and sincere condolences to the family of Gerald Ray "Gerry" Lane, do hereby honor the memory of this man who transformed automotive sales in the Gulf South Region of the United States, and do hereby express their respect and appreciation for a life well lived in the person of Baton Rouge's own Gerry Lane, a man you could count on.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Mrs. Faye Lane.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES