



1 voice. When you are playing the piano, it is not digital. You must find a singing sound-the  
2 'eye of the sound', she called it."; and

3 WHEREAS, under the tutelage of his mother, he continued to develop, and at the age  
4 of twelve, he won a statewide piano competition that enabled him to debut with the Houston  
5 Symphony Orchestra, and at age seventeen, Van entered The Juilliard School in New York  
6 City, and at the young age of twenty, won the Levintritt Competition, which had not awarded  
7 a first-place prize since 1949 and which earned him debuts with such major orchestras as  
8 Cleveland, Denver, Indianapolis, and Pittsburgh, as well as a coveted New York  
9 Philharmonic debut with the great Dimitri Mitropoulos, which took place in Carnegie Hall  
10 on November 14, 1954; and

11 WHEREAS, those early experiences would provide a very strong stage presence and  
12 challenge for the young and talented Van Cliburn that would ultimately lead to international  
13 fame beginning in 1958, when Van traveled behind the Iron Curtain to Moscow, USSR to  
14 compete in the first Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition and with the aspirations  
15 of a nation on his shoulders, he emerged as the gold medal winner against all odds and  
16 sealing his legacy as one of the most persuasive ambassadors of American culture, as well  
17 as one of the greatest pianists in the history of music; and

18 WHEREAS, Van Cliburn being blessed as a naturally gifted pianist whose enormous  
19 hands had an uncommonly wide span which he used to develop a commanding technique,  
20 cultivated an exceptionally warm tone and manifested deep musical sensitivity and at its  
21 best, his playing had a surging romantic fervor, but one leavened by an unsentimental  
22 restraint that seemed peculiarly American which led the towering Russian pianist Sviatoslav  
23 Richter, a juror for the competition, to describe Van Cliburn as a genius-a word, he added,  
24 "I do not use lightly about performers."; and

25 WHEREAS, following the competition, he triumphantly returned to the United States  
26 to a ticker tape parade in New York City, the first ever ticker tape celebration for a classical  
27 musician, and the first for a native son of Louisiana which led to the then Mayor of  
28 Shreveport, Robert R. Wagner, proclaiming at a ceremony at the Shreveport City Hall that,  
29 "With his two hands, Van Cliburn struck a chord which has resounded around the world,  
30 raising our prestige with artists and music lovers everywhere."; and

1           WHEREAS, with his historic 1958 victory at the first International Tchaikovsky  
2 Competition in Moscow, at the height of the Cold War, Van Cliburn tore down cultural  
3 barriers years ahead of glasnost and perestroika, transcending politics by demonstrating the  
4 universality of classical music and as a world renowned pianist, Louisiana's own Van  
5 Cliburn continued to experience great popularity in the years that followed and proudly  
6 performed for royalty, heads of state in Europe, Asia, and South America, and for every  
7 president of the United States since Harry Truman; and

8           WHEREAS, ever mindful of his Louisiana heritage, Van Cliburn returned again to  
9 Louisiana in 2006, and appeared as a Pennington Great Performers Series Artist with the  
10 Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra; and

11           WHEREAS, throughout his career, Van Cliburn was awarded numerous awards such  
12 as the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, Kennedy Center Honors in 2001, the  
13 Presidential Medal of Freedom from President George W. Bush in 2003, the Russian Order  
14 of Friendship from President Vladimir Putin in October 2004, and most recently in 2011, he  
15 was awarded the National Medal of Arts by President Barack Obama, and it should be  
16 recognized that the three national awards presented by the presidents of the United States  
17 of America and Russia are the highest civilian awards presented by both countries; and

18           WHEREAS, upon his death, *The Wall Street Journal*, when reporting on his death  
19 stated that Van Cliburn was a "cultural hero" who "rocketed to unheard-of stardom for a  
20 classical musician in the U.S." and went on to call him "the rare classical musician to enjoy  
21 rock star status"; and

22           WHEREAS, upon his death the state of Louisiana lost one of its finest sons and  
23 because of his numerous accomplishments the passing of Harvey "Van" LaVan Cliburn, Jr.,  
24 leaves a void in the community and creates a genuine sense of profound sorrow with his  
25 friends and family; and

26           WHEREAS, the memory of Harvey "Van" LaVan Cliburn, Jr, will remain eternal in  
27 the hearts and minds of his family, friends, and all of those who knew and loved him.

28           THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby  
29 celebrate the life and accomplishments of Harvey LaVan Cliburn, Jr., and expresses its  
30 sincere and heartfelt condolences upon his death.

1           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted  
2 to the family of Harvey LaVan Cliburn, Jr.

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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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Burrell

HCR No. 180

Expresses the condolences of the legislature upon the death of Harvey LaVan Cliburn, Jr.