

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 139

BY SENATOR LONG AND REPRESENTATIVES BROWN AND COX

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To commend Wright Waters on receiving the 2014 Dave Dixon Louisiana Sports Leadership Award and for being named to the 2014 Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame Induction Class.

WHEREAS, the Dave Dixon Award is presented annually by the Louisiana Sports Writers Association's thirty-member Hall of Fame selection committee to an individual who has played a decisive role as a sports leader or administrator benefitting Louisiana or bringing credit to Louisiana on the national or international level; and

WHEREAS, with a career expanding forty years in collegiate athletics, Wright Waters has been a key figure in NCAA Division I sports, most notably as the commissioner of the Sun Belt Conference and as the executive director of the Football Bowl Association; and

WHEREAS, in the 1980's and before moving to the conference level, Mr. Waters held various administrative positions in the athletic departments of several universities in the south, including associate athletics director at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and senior associate and interim athletics director at Tulane University; and

WHEREAS, in 1991, Wright Waters left Tulane University to become commissioner of the Southern Conference and under his leadership, the Southern Conference expanded to twelve members, added three women's sports and one men's sport and posted record revenue from their basketball tournament; and

WHEREAS, in 1998, Mr. Waters left the Southern Conference to take over as only the fourth commissioner of the New Orleans-based Sun Belt Conference, and in 2001, when the Sun Belt added football, he became one of only two commissioners in modern-day NCAA history to oversee the addition of football as a league sport; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure with the Sun Belt Conference, the league added five members and increased its sports sponsorship by five, became a Bowl Championship Series conference, gained a permanent seat on the NCAA Board of Directors and negotiated the

most expansive television agreement in league history; and

WHEREAS, the greatest strides during his tenure came in football, where Mr. Waters was integral in convincing many league schools of the benefits of moving to Division I and forming a football league and also was a guiding force behind founding the New Orleans Bowl which is now a fixture in the New Orleans December sports calendar; and

WHEREAS, demonstrating his commitment to his adopted Louisiana home, Mr. Waters was the commanding influence behind the league maintaining its headquarters in New Orleans following the ravages of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, when many of his league members were advocating to relocate; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, Mr. Waters retired as commissioner of the Sun Belt Conference and became the first executive director of the Football Bowl Association, a nonprofit association representing postseason college football bowl games that helps the bowls to understand their changing role in the college football landscape with the advent of the playoff era; and

WHEREAS, throughout his forty-year career as an administrator in collegiate athletics, Mr. Waters has proven himself time and time again to be a committed and visionary leader, always using his skills and talents to successfully grow and transition the institution or organization employing him to the next level or the next phase.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend Wright Waters on receiving the 2014 Dave Dixon Louisiana Sports Leadership Award and for being named to the 2014 Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame Induction Class.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Wright Waters.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES