

Regular Session, 2014

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 183

BY REPRESENTATIVE COX

COMMENDATIONS: Commends Tom Benson upon the occasion of his induction into the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To commend Tom Benson, owner of the New Orleans Saints and Pelicans, on the occasion  
3 of his induction into the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame.

4 WHEREAS, the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame was established in 1958 and was  
5 intended, in the words of Otis Harris, sports editor of the *Shreveport Journal*, to be "the  
6 Louisiana Hall of Fame – a hall of fame for the state's greatest athletes, men or women,  
7 amateur or professional, living or dead"; and

8 WHEREAS, though the Hall of Fame began over fifty years ago, in 2013 the Hall  
9 of Fame celebrated the grand opening of its permanent and appropriate home for the  
10 recognition of Louisiana's greatest sports heroes at the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame and  
11 Northwest Louisiana History Museum in the National Historic District of Natchitoches; and

12 WHEREAS, among the remarkable class of honorees to be inducted into the  
13 Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame on Saturday, June 21, 2014, is New Orleans native,  
14 businessman, and philanthropist, Tom Benson; and

15 WHEREAS, born and raised in New Orleans, Louisiana, Tom Benson served in  
16 World War II for the U.S. Navy and then graduated with an accounting degree from Loyola  
17 University of New Orleans in 1948; and

18 WHEREAS, known for his ownership of the New Orleans Saints since 1985, the  
19 New Orleans native has been at the forefront of sports in the Crescent City for nearly thirty  
20 years; and

1           WHEREAS, in 1985, Tom Benson purchased the New Orleans Saints from John  
2 Mecom, saving the NFL franchise from a potential move to Jacksonville, Florida, which  
3 Benson realized would have resulted in negative economic implications for not just the city  
4 of New Orleans, but the entire state of Louisiana; and

5           WHEREAS, as the new owner, Benson quickly hired Jim Finks, a 1995 inductee of  
6 the Pro Football Hall of Fame, as general manager and Jim Mora as head coach, who two  
7 years later helped deliver the club's first winning season and playoff appearance since its  
8 inception in 1967; and

9           WHEREAS, as owner, Benson has also presided over the team's first division title  
10 in 1991, first playoff victory in 2000, and the first NFL title in 2009 after the Saints  
11 delivered a 31-17 win over the Indianapolis Colts in Super Bowl XLIV on February 7, 2010;  
12 and

13           WHEREAS, throughout his tenure as owner of the New Orleans Saints, Benson has  
14 served on numerous NFL committees, including three terms as Chairman of the prestigious  
15 and powerful Finance Committee; and

16           WHEREAS, Benson was also instrumental in bringing five Super Bowls to New  
17 Orleans, including Super Bowl XLVII which was played on February 5, 2013; and

18           WHEREAS, Benson, who was also the owner and operator of the New Orleans  
19 Voodoo franchise of the Arena Football League from 2002 through 2008, surprised the  
20 entire region when he purchased the New Orleans Hornets, now renamed the Pelicans, from  
21 the NBA in the spring of 2012; and

22           WHEREAS, Benson and his wife, Gayle, are active philanthropists as well,  
23 establishing numerous endowments and making substantial donations to various educational  
24 institutions; and

25           WHEREAS, in January 2012, Benson and his wife were awarded the *Pro Ecclesia*  
26 *et Pontifice* for their generosity to the Catholic Church, the highest papal honor that Catholic  
27 lay persons can receive; and

28           WHEREAS, the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana wishes to  
29 recognize New Orleans native Tom Benson for his economic and philanthropic contributions

1 to this state, and for his well-deserved induction into the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame, for  
2 he is truly a Louisiana sports icon.

3           THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the  
4 Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend Tom Benson upon the occasion of his  
5 induction into the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame.

6           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted  
7 to Tom Benson.

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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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Cox

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Commends Tom Benson, New Orleans native, businessman, philanthropist, and La. sports icon, upon the occasion of his induction into the La. Sports Hall of Fame.