

2015 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 24

BY SENATOR BROOME

CONDOLENCES. Expresses condolences upon the death of Deacon Chairman Emeritus Jesse Spears Jr.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To express the sincere condolences of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the
3 death of Deacon Chairman Emeritus Jesse Spears Jr.

4 WHEREAS, it is with great sorrow and sadness that the members of the Louisiana
5 Senate have learned of the death of Deacon Chairman Emeritus Jesse Spears Jr., known
6 throughout the community as "Sugar" or "Mr. Jesse," on Monday, April 6, 2015, at age
7 eighty-seven; and

8 WHEREAS, a native and resident of Zachary, Louisiana, he was an only child, born
9 June 8, 1927 to Jesse Spears Sr., and Leona Wesley Shoemaker; and

10 WHEREAS, he was married to Virginia M. Spears for sixty-four years and they were
11 blessed with five children; and

12 WHEREAS, a deacon at New Pilgrim B.C. for over sixty-one years, community
13 activist, and civil rights pioneer, Jesse was indelibly involved in and always made himself
14 available for a cause, never being far away from the "action" in his community or in his
15 church, for he was blessed with wisdom, knowledge, and the Holy Spirit; and

16 WHEREAS, Jesse began his early educational endeavors at Little Star Baptist
17 Church, and then later traveled by train from Zachary to Scotlandville to attend Southern
18 University Laboratory School, graduating in 1945 and also attended tailoring school,

1 becoming a tailor; and

2 WHEREAS, a veteran of World War II, he began work in the Zachary area at
3 Kennedy's lumber company, and in Baker at Merrick's gas station, before being employed
4 by the Ethel Refinery plant in Baton Rouge; and

5 WHEREAS, Sugar retired from Copolymer Rubber and Chemical plant in 1989, after
6 thirty years of service; and

7 WHEREAS, baptized by the late Reverend Mack Hill in 1938, he faithfully served
8 New Pilgrim throughout his life: singing in the choir and then serving for sixty-one years in
9 the Deacon Ministry; fifty-five years as chairman; and

10 WHEREAS, in the community, Jesse was a founding member of Zachary Men's
11 Club, and had been a member since 1959; and

12 WHEREAS, he was inspired to register to vote and became actively involved in local
13 politics, leading to his efforts in founding the Zachary Voters League; and

14 WHEREAS, a driving force in the old Northwestern High School PTA, he
15 spearheaded efforts to obtain uniforms for the school's football team and was instrumental
16 in establishing the Northwestern High School Braves Backers; and

17 WHEREAS, he served as president of both Northwestern's and Zachary High's
18 parent-teacher organizations; and

19 WHEREAS, Jesse lent his time and expertise to service as scoutmaster for Zachary
20 Boys Scout troops 93 and 240 and several members of these troops became ministers; and

21 WHEREAS, more of his community activities brought him to service as a member
22 of the Zachary Biracial Committee, formed to lay the groundwork for the desegregation of
23 Zachary schools in 1969 and this formative work with the schools in Zachary and his ability
24 to work with diverse coalitions of city officials, parents, administrators, teachers, and
25 students, led to his being appointed by former Governor Mike Foster to the first interim
26 school board of the Zachary Community School District; and

27 WHEREAS, among his other civic engagements and honors include work as leader
28 with the Zachary Benevolent Society, the Zachary Cemetery Maintenance Corporation,
29 Incorporated, and the Zachary Kiwanis Club; and

30 WHEREAS, in 2005, he was recognized as "Zachary Man of the Year"; in 2007, he

1 was voted into the Zachary Chamber of Commerce's Hall of Distinction; and in 2008, he was
2 chosen as a recipient of the Martin Luther King Humanitarian Award by Alpha Phi Alpha
3 Fraternity, Inc.; and

4 WHEREAS, he was preceded in death by his parents, Jesse Spears Sr., and Leona
5 Wesley Shoemaker; maternal grandmother, Lucinda Albert Green; father-in-law and
6 mother-in-law, Willie and Magaret Morrison, and a daughter, Beverly Jean Spears; and

7 WHEREAS, Sugar leaves to cherish his memory his loving and devoted wife,
8 Virginia M. Spears; four children, Ronald (Alice), Wayne (Victoria), Connie Thornton
9 (Bruce), and Carl (Ethel); four aunts, Isabell George, Jessie Green, Lucinda Green, and
10 Gertrude Spears; one uncle, Samuel Polk; in-laws, Ruby Morrison, Mary L. Hutson, Henry
11 Morrison (Willie Mae), and Allen Riley Sr; eleven grandchildren and fourteen great
12 grandchildren; two godchildren, Elizabeth Hayes and Tammy Lee; first cousin and "adopted
13 daughter" Sharon McKnight; and a host of "adopted sons", nieces, nephews, cousins, and
14 friends; and

15 WHEREAS, because of his numerous accomplishments in public and private life,
16 the death of Deacon Chairman Emeritus Jesse Spears Jr. has left a void in his community
17 and in our state and has created a genuine sense of profound sorrow in his friends and
18 family; and

19 WHEREAS, the success of the state of Louisiana, the strength of our communities,
20 and the overall vitality of American society depend, in great measure, upon people like Jesse
21 Spears Jr. who dedicate their lives to making the world a better place.

22 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana
23 does hereby acknowledge with gratitude the outstanding service and many accomplishments
24 of Deacon Chairman Emeritus Jesse Spears Jr., and extend sincere condolences to his family
25 on the occasion of his death.

26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to
27 Virginia M. Spears.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Jerry J. Guillot.

	DIGEST	
SR 24 Original	2015 Regular Session	Broome
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