

2015 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 38

BY REPRESENTATIVE BADON AND SENATORS ADLEY, ALLAIN, AMEDEE, APPEL, BROOME, BROWN, BUFFINGTON, CROWE, DONAHUE, GALLOT, GUILLORY, JOHNS, KOSTELKA, LONG, MARTINY, MILLS, MORRELL, MORRISH, MURRAY, NEVERS, PERRY, PETERSON, RISER, GARY SMITH, TARVER, THOMPSON, WALSWORTH, WARD, AND WHITE

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To commend Dr. Norman Francis upon his retirement after forty-six years as president of Xavier University of Louisiana in New Orleans.

WHEREAS, Norman Francis was a Xavier University student, graduating with honors in 1952 and serving as class president each year of his matriculation; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Francis was the first black graduate of Loyola University Law School in New Orleans, after which he served in the United States Army; following his Army service, Dr. Francis worked in the United States Attorney's Office, where he helped integrate federal agencies in the South; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Francis pursued a career in education and became the dean of men at Xavier; in 1961, after the Freedom Riders' bus was bombed in Alabama, Dean Francis offered housing to the Riders in one of Xavier University's dorms; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Francis accepted the presidency of his alma mater in 1968, and since his installation, enrollment at Xavier has increased almost threefold and the campus has expanded from five buildings covering one city block to sixteen buildings on sixty acres; Dr. Francis has guided Xavier University from a twenty million dollar endowment to more than one hundred thirty million dollars; and

WHEREAS, as one of the early voices calling for education reform, Dr. Francis served on the 1983 National Commission on Excellence in Education and had a hand in producing "A Nation At Risk", a report on the deficiencies in the American education system that remains influential in the shaping of education strategies; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Francis' educational focus has led more than sixty percent of incoming Xavier University freshmen students to concentrate their studies in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math, and Xavier University is the top producer of black students earning medical degrees; as president, Dr. Francis has presented nearly twenty thousand diplomas to graduating seniors; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure as Xavier University president, Dr. Francis was called upon to serve on more than fifty boards; he has received forty honorary degrees; Dr. Francis was honored by *The Times-Picayune* in 1991 with the Loving Cup, an award for his unselfish work for the community without expectation of public recognition or material reward; in 2006, President George W. Bush awarded Dr. Francis the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civil honor, for his lifetime of service to civic causes; and

WHEREAS, following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Dr. Francis was appointed chairman of the Louisiana Recovery Authority and was tasked with heading the state's first efforts toward rebuilding; and

WHEREAS, while Dr. Norman Francis will be sorely missed at the helm of Xavier University after his retirement at the end of the 2014-2015 school year, his influence on the school's educational mission will remain a positive force and provide clear guidance towards perpetual improvement in the years to come.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend Dr. Norman Francis for forty-six years of distinguished service as president of Xavier University; does hereby express sincere appreciation for a job well done in preparing students for careers and civic contributions upon graduation from Xavier University, in part by his own example; and does hereby extend best wishes for a full and happy life upon his retirement.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Dr. Norman Francis.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE