

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 36

BY SENATOR CHABERT

A RESOLUTION

To commend Viona Lapeyrouse Chabert on the occasion of her eightieth birthday.

WHEREAS, Viona Lapeyrouse Chabert, the daughter of Abby and Florence Lapeyrouse of Chauvin, was born April 23, 1935; and

WHEREAS, Miss Viona was the oldest of five children: Ouida, Una, Lloyd, and Tillman; and

WHEREAS, the Lapeyrouse family lived on Bayou Lil Caillou and that is where they made their living by trapping and shrimping, with Abby also working to make ends meet as a janitor and at a small gas station that he owned; and

WHEREAS, after his distinguished service in the United States Army during the Korean Conflict, the late Senator Leonard J. Chabert of Cut-Off met and later married Viona, on May 10, 1953; and

WHEREAS, together she and Leonard settled down in Chauvin and raised their five children: Donna Chabert Malbrough, former Senator Marty J. Chabert, Lori Chabert Blanchard, Lenny Chabert, and Senator Norby Chabert - who claims to be her favorite; and

WHEREAS, Miss Viona supported Leonard in his efforts to attain his graduate equivalency diploma and a degree in education from Nicholls State University on the G.I. Bill; and

WHEREAS, the old saying, "Behind every great man is a great woman" certainly applies to Miss Viona who, as a mother and homemaker, allowed Leonard to pursue his political and business ventures; and

WHEREAS, while she was hesitant about Leonard entering the field of politics, she was his biggest supporter during his public service as justice of the peace, school board member, two-term state representative, three-term state senator, and President Pro-Tempore of the Louisiana Senate; and

WHEREAS, upon Leonard's founding of a state charity hospital in Houma, the South Louisiana Medical Center, Viona gave her time as a volunteer managing the hospital gift shop; and

WHEREAS, after Leonard's untimely death in 1991, Miss Viona assumed leadership of the Chabert family with reluctant dignity and grace; and

WHEREAS, one of her proudest moments came on the first day of Marty's term in the Louisiana State Senate, when the legislature changed the name of the South Louisiana Medical Center to the Leonard J. Chabert Medical Center; and

WHEREAS, to this day Miss Viona believes in the mission of the Leonard J. Chabert Medical Center to serve the poor and the uninsured people of the bayou region that find themselves in the same position as she and Leonard did growing up and in the early days of their marriage; and

WHEREAS, Miss Viona is the proud grandmother of sixteen, prouder great-grandmother of thirteen, and excited to welcome as many more as the good Lord will bless her with; and

WHEREAS, as the matriarch of the Chabert family, she is beloved, respected, and known up and down the bayou as "Lady Vi"; and

WHEREAS, she is the only lady in Louisiana history to have been married to a state senator and mother to two state senators; and

WHEREAS, Miss Viona is a fine Christian woman and a true Louisiana lady in every sense of the phrase.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend Viona Lapeyrouse Chabert on the occasion of her eightieth birthday.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Viona Lapeyrouse Chabert.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE