

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 104

BY SENATORS NEVERS, ALARIO, DONAHUE, ERDEY AND WHITE

A RESOLUTION

To commend the Honorable Gordon Burgess, Tangipahoa Parish President, for his years of meritorious public service to the citizens of Tangipahoa Parish, the state of Louisiana, and the nation, and to recognize his many accomplishments.

WHEREAS, it is with great admiration that Gordon Burgess is considered "the face of Tangipahoa Parish" having served eight terms as parish president; as a well-respected pacesetter within the Florida Parishes, his leadership, fiscal responsibility, and foresight have accelerated economic growth and his realignment of local agencies has produced a more efficient delivery of essential services; and

WHEREAS, the extraordinary efforts of Gordon Burgess have propelled the parish forward with highway network expansion, drainage improvements, fire protection, libraries, health units, and new governmental facilities; and

WHEREAS, these enhancements were based upon solid conservative management principles of careful budgeting, resourceful planning, hard work, and a constant focus on the objective at hand; and

WHEREAS, Gordon Burgess was elected as the first parish president in 1986 when the police jury system was replaced with a home rule charter; he has fulfilled his election promise, which was to make local government more viable, accountable, and transparent; and

WHEREAS, he introduced innovative fiscal methods such as "Pay As You Go", a financial plan, which was almost unheard of in government, to reduce bond indebtedness and to capture state and federal monies to fund major infrastructure improvements, highway resurfacing, bridge repair, railroad safety, tourism, and emergency preparedness; and

WHEREAS, best known for his "can do" attitude, Gordon Burgess has served as either chairman or member of the State Board of Commerce and Industry, the Pontchartrain Causeway Commission, the Police Jury Association, the Zachary Taylor Parkway Association, the Louisiana Federal Property Advisory Board, Parishes Against Coastal Erosion, the Amite Rotary Club, the Hammond, Ponchatoula, and Amite chambers of commerce, and the Louisiana Cattlemen's Association; and

WHEREAS, in 1982, during the administration of Governor David C. Treen, he was appointed as chairman of the Louisiana State Racing Commission; under his leadership, the commission regained its credibility and respectability when Burgess led the fight to secure funding for a Louisiana State Police investigative unit assigned to the horse racing industry, and his other reforms improved racetrack safety for both horses and jockeys; and

WHEREAS, often the mettle of man is tested under the most horrific circumstances; in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Gordon Burgess exemplified self-reliance, altruism, and dedication; he took command of recovery efforts at the Emergency Operations Center, and he lived on the premises for one month, not to return home until the parish had regained a measurable portion of basic services and utilities; and

WHEREAS, it is said that behind every great man is an even greater woman; Margaret Morgan Burgess, his wife of sixty-one years, stood by his side through this crisis, cooking two meals per day for volunteers and emergency responders while Gordon worked out the logistics of acquisition and distribution of supplies to those in need; they faced this struggle like any other, together as a team; and

WHEREAS, his diligence has brought to fruition numerous projects such as the Florida Parishes Arena, two additional parish health units, animal control facilities, award-winning environmental landfill management, Smart 911, housing assistance, and enhanced law enforcement capabilities; and

WHEREAS, Gordon Burgess is most content when he is "working for the people", no matter what that undertaking may be; fellow public servants seek his counsel on difficult issues of the day, and Gordon remains a patient mentor for novice statesmen to foster their interest in government and to school them on the finer points of diplomacy; and

WHEREAS, Gordon Burgess honorably served his country assigned to a Nike

Missile installation while in the United States Army and also served four years on active reserve status in the Louisiana National Guard; and

WHEREAS, Gordon and Margaret are active members of the First Baptist Church in Independence where he serves as deacon and she serves in the music ministry; and the couple was honored to be chosen to reign as Oyster King and Oyster Pearl at the 2013 Amite Oyster Festival; and

WHEREAS, his qualities of tenacity, energy, compassion, sincerity, and generosity of spirit have served him well in public life; after thirty-two years, Gordon Burgess still maintains the trust and respect of his staff, colleagues, and constituency; and

WHEREAS, Gordon Burgess exemplifies all the finest qualities of a proficient, parochial government leader who continuously pursues the best interests of those he serves; his effective leadership and exemplary accomplishments are reflected in the economic prosperity and well-being that the parish now enjoys.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend Parish President Gordon Burgess on his performance of invaluable public service for the grateful citizens of Tangipahoa Parish, the state of Louisiana, and the nation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express its sincerest appreciation for his lifetime of dedication and leadership and sincerely extends best wishes for success and happiness in the next chapter of his life.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the Honorable Gordon Burgess, president of Tangipahoa Parish.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE