

2015 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 124

BY SENATOR HEITMEIER

CONDOLENCES. Expresses condolences upon the death of Rebecca "Becky" Underwood Brechtel.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To express the sincere condolences of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the
3 death of Rebecca "Becky" Underwood Brechtel, wife, mother, grandmother,
4 educator, devout Christian, and community activist in Mississippi and New Orleans,
5 Louisiana.

6 WHEREAS, Rebecca "Becky" Underwood was born in Foley, Alabama, on July 7,
7 1940, and she graduated from Foley High School in 1958; and

8 WHEREAS, Becky Underwood continued her education at the University of
9 Southern Mississippi (USM) in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, that fall and she was a member of
10 the Dixie Darlings for all four years of her undergraduate work at USM and a member of
11 Delta Zeta social sorority; and

12 WHEREAS, Becky received her Bachelor of Science degree in Library Science in
13 1962 and a masters of science degree in counseling and guidance in 1964; and

14 WHEREAS, while a student at USM, Becky met the great love of her life, Joseph
15 Berengher Brechtel and the two married on January 21, 1965; and

16 WHEREAS, Becky continued her education at USM, earning a specialist degree in
17 counseling in 1975; and

18 WHEREAS, Becky's commitment to education caused her to persist in her studies

1 until she earned a doctor of education degree from USM in 1979 and she would thereafter
2 be known to many as "Dr. B"; and

3 WHEREAS, Dr. B held certification as a guidance counselor, as a secondary social
4 studies teacher, as a librarian, as an English language arts teacher, and as a teacher of the
5 academically gifted; and

6 WHEREAS, Becky's work life at USM included years as a school librarian, a
7 university instructor of library science, a secondary level guidance counselor, a coordinator
8 with the office of orientation and advisement, an assistant professor in the department of
9 counseling and psychology, and a director of high school and junior college relations from
10 1969-1979; and

11 WHEREAS, having accomplished a great deal at her alma mater, USM, Dr. B
12 brought her professional talents to Loyola University in New Orleans, first as the dean of
13 admissions, then in the capacities of director of undergraduate and graduate admissions, and,
14 beginning in 1979, she served as assistant professor of adult education and instructor of
15 sociology; and

16 WHEREAS, Dr. B eventually moved on to Delgado Community College where she
17 served as vice president of student affairs and college relations; and

18 WHEREAS, Dr. B also served as assistant vice president for academic affairs as a
19 visiting professor at Indiana State University in Terre Haute; and

20 WHEREAS, with the education of youth so near to her heart, Dr. B continued her
21 service on the Orleans Parish School Board, as librarian and academic ranking teacher at
22 Benjamin Franklin Magnet Elementary, at Harriet Tubman Elementary School, and at Edna
23 Karr Magnet High School, and as director of the ADEPT after-school programs in seventy
24 schools citywide; and

25 WHEREAS, Dr. B's last assignment, beginning in 2003, was as the coordinator of
26 the gifted and talented department and as a gifted teacher at Belle Chasse Academy, until
27 her retirement in 2014; and

28 WHEREAS, Dr. B devoted fifty-two years and her considerable talents to educate
29 children of all ages, from elementary through college and her unique gifts brought distant
30 horizons to within reach of students, whether a young child learning to read and write or a

1 library science major engaged in the process of bringing the magic of books to students at
2 all levels; and

3 WHEREAS, through her years as an educator of minds from six to twenty-six, Becky
4 was a committed Christian and she employed her faith to serve others, especially, through
5 nearly thirty mission trips to aid the efforts of Father Patrick Quinn of Saltillo, Mexico; and

6 WHEREAS, throughout her life, Becky was a devout member of several home
7 parishes, including, St. Margaret of Scotland in Foley, Alabama; St. Thomas in Hattiesburg,
8 Mississippi; Holy Name of Mary in Algiers Point, Louisiana; St. Andrew the Apostle in
9 Algiers, Louisiana; and, finally, St. Francis Xavier in Old Metairie, Louisiana; and

10 WHEREAS, Becky was a dedicated humanitarian and her many community activities
11 reflected that commitment to others, including: the hunger fund at the Center for Jesus the
12 Lord on Rampart Street in New Orleans; Ozanam Inn, an emergency shelter for homeless
13 men in New Orleans; the Harry Tompson Rebuild Center for the Homeless; and the St.
14 Joseph Native American School in South Dakota; and

15 WHEREAS, Becky and her husband founded the Brechtel Institute and for more than
16 forty years the two created over seven hundred management and motivational workshops
17 that were presented throughout the world; and

18 WHEREAS, Becky also contributed in a wide-range of activities which brought her
19 well-deserved acclaim, including: the honor of being named a Fulbright Scholar to Africa
20 in the 1990's; she authored or co-authored articles that were published in eight nationally-
21 circulated journals; she was the past national scholarship chairwoman for Delta Zeta national
22 sorority; she was a past chairwoman for the "Garden Gala" to benefit the Little Sisters of the
23 Poor (1994-1998); she served as speaker at the Louisiana Department of Education gifted
24 and talented state conference (2007-2009); she was named outstanding educator by the
25 American Institute for History Education in 2008; she was awarded the Thomas Jefferson
26 Liberty Fellowship from the American Institute of History Education (2007-2009); she was
27 a member of Delta Kappa Gamma, education honorary; she was a member of Pi Tau Chi,
28 religious honorary; and she was a member of Blue Key Honor Fraternity and was honored
29 as the Cabrini District Educator of the Year in 2014; and

30 WHEREAS, Becky and Berengher were blessed with two children, Joseph "Barry"

1 Berengher Brechtel Jr. and Royceann Brechtel, who filled their lives with joy and happiness;
2 and

3 WHEREAS, despite the terrible loss of Barry in an automobile accident in 2008,
4 Becky and Berengher derived endless joy and love from their children and grandchildren and
5 Becky is survived by daughter and son-in-law, Royceann Brechtel Fugler and husband,
6 Chad, daughter-in-law, Pam Bitterwolf Brechtel, and grandchildren Joseph B. "Beren"
7 Brechtel, Sophia Marie Brechtel, Bennet Gordon Brechtel, Kyleigh Alyse Fugler, and
8 Catherine "Cate" Ann Fugler; and

9 WHEREAS, Brechtel Memorial Park on the West Bank, named in memory of John
10 P. Brechtel Jr. who was Becky's father-in-law, is the location of the Joseph Berengher
11 Brechtel Jr. Memorial Park Lagoon, a beautiful location dedicated to Barry in 2008 and now
12 listed on wetland maps of the area as "Brechtel Point"; and

13 WHEREAS, the Brechtel family, including Becky and Berengher, their children and
14 grandchildren and many cousins, are committed to preserving this beautiful native habitat
15 as a tribute to both John Brechtel and his grandson, Captain Barry, who was part owner of
16 the Breton Sound Marina in the Hopedale area; and

17 WHEREAS, Becky Underwood Brechtel broadened the minds of her students,
18 enriched her community, lived her Christian faith, and reveled in the love of her family and
19 friends, and her energy and spirit will leave a void in the hearts of all whose lives she
20 influenced.

21 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana
22 does hereby express sincere condolences upon the death of Rebecca "Becky" Underwood
23 Brechtel.

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to
25 Joseph Berengher Brechtel Sr.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Mary Dozier O'Brien.
