

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 8

BY SENATOR PEACOCK AND REPRESENTATIVE SEABAUGH

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To express the sincere condolences of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the death of international bridge champion, Betty Kennedy of Shreveport, and to celebrate a life well lived.

WHEREAS, Betty Kennedy was a living legend in the world of international bridge competition; she was also a gentlewoman of abundant social grace; and

WHEREAS, she was a classic lady and a true southern belle, as well known for her cultural endeavors as her quick wit, sparkling eyes, and contagious smile; and

WHEREAS, Betty Kennedy was known as the "First Lady of Bridge" by bridge aficionados everywhere, having won at every competitive level including many world titles; and

WHEREAS, Betty Ann Kelley was born March 13, 1930, in El Dorado, Arkansas, to parents, Evan Nelson Kelley and Ruth Todd Tiffin; and

WHEREAS, a gifted scholar, she graduated from Fair Park High School at the age of sixteen; and

WHEREAS, at twenty years of age, after contracting a serious illness, she suffered partial paralysis and a loss of cognitive abilities; and upon the recommendation of her physician, she began to play bridge in an attempt to regain her mental acuity; and

WHEREAS, with dogged determination, Betty began what would become her love of the game at the Bridge Clubhouse in Shreveport playing many hands and sharpening her skills; and

WHEREAS, Betty Kennedy arrived on the national scene in 1960 and won her first North American Bridge Championship (NABC), then soon after, retired to marry and raise a family; and

WHEREAS, in 1970, she eagerly returned to competitive play with the specific goal of winning a world championship; and

WHEREAS, Betty Kennedy had an irrepressible zeal for the game; she formed a twenty-six year partnership with Carol Sanders which was among the longest and most successful partnerships in bridge history; they stood at the forefront of women's competition, winning ten NABC titles and four world championships; and

WHEREAS, after another brief period of semi-retirement, Betty partnered with Kathie Wei-Sender in 1999 and they captured three additional NABC titles and the 2003 Venice Cup from the World Bridge Federation; and

WHEREAS, she went on to win a plethora of other titles during her career that include the North American Bridge Championships and Whitehead Women's Pairs, the Smith Life Master Women's Pairs, the Machlin Women's Swiss Teams, the Wagar Women's Knockout Teams, and the Sternberg Women's Board-a-Match Teams; and

WHEREAS, Betty Kennedy would become the only woman to win national and international bridge titles over a time period of five decades, winning sixteen North American championships, five world gold medals, and three silver medals; and

WHEREAS, she piloted the U.S. Senior Team to victory at the inaugural World Senior Bridge Championship in Maastricht, Netherlands, as captain and coach; and

WHEREAS, many honors were bestowed upon her during her lifetime including receipt of awards and acknowledgments from the Shreveport-Bossier Sports Hall of Fame, the Louisiana Hall of Fame, the American Contract Bridge League Hall of Fame, and its Sidney H. Lazard Jr. Sportsmanship Award; and

WHEREAS, the American Contract Bridge League described Mrs. Kennedy as "glamorous, daring, skillful, and aggressive"; she attained the rank of Grand Life Master and surpassed a record of 20,000 Masterpoints; and

WHEREAS, across a bridge table, Betty met the love of her life, her husband, John Earle Kennedy Jr., who would be her mentor and biggest fan; they played bridge and traveled extensively until his death in 2008; and

WHEREAS, she is survived by her children, David Kennedy, John Kennedy, Jay Welch, Evangeline Welch, and grandson, Spencer Kennedy, extended family, and many friends and admirers throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, Betty Kennedy had sat across the table from highly capable competitors

that included film actor Omar Sharif and the vice premier of China, all of whom were bested by her superb skill set at one time or another; and

WHEREAS, with all her accolades, she felt an obligation to help the younger, less experienced players learn how to think, feel, react, and ultimately become champions; and

WHEREAS, she supported the Shreveport Symphony and many other worthwhile civic organizations and attended the First United Methodist Church as a lifelong parishioner; and

WHEREAS, Betty Kennedy has been described as glamorous, daring, and skillful by her peers in the world of competitive bridge, and the people of Shreveport have suffered a loss as this gracious, classic lady has passed from their midst.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express its sincere condolences upon the death of international bridge champion, Betty Ann Kennedy and does hereby celebrate her lifetime of accomplishment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to her daughter, Evangeline Welch.

---

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

---

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES