

2018 Regular Session

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 36

BY SENATOR MILKOVICH

CONDOLENCES. Expresses condolences upon the death of William P. Black Sr. of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, known for his decades-long children's television persona, Buckskin Bill.

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A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To express the sincere condolences of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the death of William P. Black Sr. of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, known for his decades-long children's television persona, Buckskin Bill.

WHEREAS, William P. Black Sr. of Baton Rouge was most widely known as "Buckskin Bill", host of local programming for children's television; and

WHEREAS, Bill Black was born in 1929 in Haileyville, Oklahoma, to Harvey and Amelia Black and he died peacefully on Wednesday, January 10, 2018, at his home in Baton Rouge; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Black graduated from Classen High School in Oklahoma City, attended Oklahoma A & M, which would officially become Oklahoma State University in 1957, and received a bachelor's degree in speech with a minor in history from Arkansas State College; and

WHEREAS, while in college in Arkansas, Bill Black met Elma, who would become the love of his life, and the two married in April 1952, beginning an amazing life of love the two shared for more than six decades and they were the proud parents of three children: Ann, Bucky, and Ginger; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Black served honorably in the United States Army during the

1 Korean War era, during which he traveled around the country as an emcee and entertainer,  
2 boosting the morale of troops across the country; and

3 WHEREAS, in 1955, Bill and Elma Black moved to Baton Rouge where Bill began  
4 his career as a broadcaster and television entertainer and later in that year, the local  
5 television program, an outgrowth of Black's local television program "Storyland", "The  
6 Buckskin Bill Show" debuted in 1955 to entertain children across the broadcast area; and

7 WHEREAS, the program was aired until 1988 and at the time it was taken off the air  
8 it was the longest running children's family television program in the nation; and

9 WHEREAS, the foundation of the program was the education of children and Bill  
10 Black used his platform to inspire his young viewers to take part in calling for several  
11 important civic improvements in the Baton Rouge area, including the establishment of a  
12 local zoo, promotion of the Louisiana School for the Deaf, and advocacy for the Boy Scouts  
13 of America, as examples; and

14 WHEREAS, for fifteen years, Bill Black ended his program on WAFB-TV with the  
15 slogan, "Baton Rouge needs a zoo", encouraging his audience to become a voice in the  
16 community, a lesson that many of his young viewers took to heart as they grew up in Baton  
17 Rouge; and

18 WHEREAS, the Baton Rouge Zoo became a reality on Easter Sunday of 1970 and  
19 shortly thereafter, Buckskin Bill Black began the "Elephant March" on his program, urging  
20 his young watchers to save their pennies and donate them to the zoo to purchase two  
21 elephants; with a total collection of 650,000 pennies, or 6,500 dollars, the elephants were  
22 purchased for the zoo and appropriately named "Penny" and "Penny Too"; and

23 WHEREAS, Bill Black's legacy lives on beyond his years as a beloved television  
24 personality with the current mascot at the zoo being named "Penny"; and

25 WHEREAS, the well-being of children beyond their own was always a passion for  
26 the Black's as a couple and Elma, who as a parenting and drug abuse specialist, helped found  
27 the "I Care" program in the East Baton Rouge Parish schools, a program that provides drug,  
28 violence, and crisis counseling throughout the parish and which has been a successful  
29 program for decades; and

30 WHEREAS, Bill Black retired from television in 1990, but reentered public life in

