

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 16

BY SENATORS BISHOP, ALARIO, ALLAIN, APPEL, BARROW, BOUDREAUX, CARTER, CHABERT, CLAITOR, COLOMB, CORTEZ, DONAHUE, ERDEY, FANNIN, GATTI, HEWITT, JOHNS, LAFLEUR, LAMBERT, LONG, LUNEAU, MARTINY, MILKOVICH, MILLS, MIZELL, MORRELL, MORRISH, PEACOCK, PERRY, PETERSON, PRICE, RISER, GARY SMITH, JOHN SMITH, TARVER, THOMPSON, WALSWORTH, WARD AND WHITE

A RESOLUTION

To express the sincere condolences of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the passing of Judge Joan Bernard Armstrong of New Orleans and to note her many accomplishments as a public servant and as an instrument for change in the judiciary of the state.

WHEREAS, it is with deep sadness that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana has learned of the passing of Judge Joan Bernard Armstrong, a magnanimous public servant and former Chief Judge of the Court of Appeal, Fourth Circuit, State of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, an advocate for juvenile justice, the Honorable Joan Bernard Armstrong was appointed to a juvenile court judgeship by Governor Edwin Edwards in January 1974 and was elected without opposition to that post in the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court in June of that year; historically, the first female and the first African-American woman elected to the judiciary in the state of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, she served as the court's administrative judge from 1979 until 1981 and on the court until 1984; and

WHEREAS, in 1984, Judge Armstrong was elected without opposition to the state Court of Appeal, Fourth Circuit and became the first female appellate jurist; she became chief judge of that court in 2003 and served in that position until her retirement in 2012; and

WHEREAS, Judge Armstrong served as a role model for other African-American jurists, many of whom sought her guidance; she was a mentor and a source of inspiration for many legal professionals; and

WHEREAS, known for her keen insight and understanding, she shared her scholarship with others as an adjunct professor of law at Southern University Law Center and at the Dr. Martin Luther King Criminal Justice Center located at Grambling State University, and as a contributor to the American Judges Association Education Committee; and

WHEREAS, as a distinguished alumna of McDonogh 35 Senior High School, she matriculated to Xavier University and graduated in 1963; and

WHEREAS, while employed as a school teacher, Judge Armstrong attended night classes at Loyola University New Orleans College of Law to earn a juris doctor in 1967; and

WHEREAS, during her lengthy tenure on the bench, she administered justice on behalf of the state and families and children brought before her in juvenile court and authored extensive jurisprudence on a multitude of matters before her as an appellate jurist; and

WHEREAS, Judge Armstrong wielded influence in state judiciary circles as chair of the Louisiana Conference of Court of Appeal Judges and as a member of the Judiciary Budgetary Board, the Judicial Ethics Committee, the Judicial Human Resources Committee, and the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Criminal Justice; and

WHEREAS, Judge Armstrong was acknowledged for her public service by the receipt of a plethora of awards and honors far too numerous to count from judicial, fraternal, religious, civic, philanthropic, educational, and national organizations that recognized her exemplary community service and activism; and

WHEREAS, Judge Armstrong was presented with several awards of note from the National Bar Association, including the Jurist of the Year Award by the Women's Lawyers Division and the William H. Hastie Award by the Judicial Council; and

WHEREAS, in January 2012, Judge Armstrong stepped down from the bench after thirty-seven years of exceptional public service, which made her the longest-serving judge in the state of Louisiana at the time; and

WHEREAS, in retirement, Judge Armstrong was sought after as a keynote speaker and conferee by numerous judicial organizations; and

WHEREAS, the legacy of Judge Joan Bernard Armstrong is woven into the lives of those individuals she encountered throughout her lifetime and in her positive influence that has endured in generations of children and young adults; and

WHEREAS, Judge Armstrong was preceded in death by her husband, Andrew, and survived by a son, former state representative the Reverend David Armstrong; a daughter, Anna-Karletta Armstrong Alexander; two grandchildren, Amaya Alexander and Joshua Alexander Jr.; and a host of beloved friends; and

WHEREAS, Judge Joan Bernard Armstrong was an uncommon individual of extraordinary moral character and abiding faith, who supported the legal principles of gender equity and racial equality that she knew to be just and righteous, and the ethical concept that all human beings were to be afforded equal protection before the law.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express sincere and heartfelt condolences upon the passing of Judge Joan Bernard Armstrong, formerly of the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court and Chief Judge of the Court of Appeal, Fourth Circuit, State of Louisiana, for her tireless dedication to the improvement of the administration of justice in Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby recognize her outstanding public service to the city of New Orleans, the state of Louisiana, and the nation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the family of Judge Joan Bernard Armstrong.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE