

2019 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 262

BY REPRESENTATIVE WHITE

A RESOLUTION

To designate June 8, 2019, as Valeria Payton Hicks Day in Bogalusa and Washington Parish.

WHEREAS, Valeria Payton Hicks is a native of the city of Bogalusa who was born on June 8, 1929; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Hicks was married to the late civil rights leader, Robert "Bob" Hicks, and has six children and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren, in addition to twenty-five children whom she has informally adopted in the Bogalusa community; and

WHEREAS, Valeria attended Central High School and graduated from Wesley Ray High School; and

WHEREAS, as a young woman, Valeria Hicks remained so steadfast in her dream to become a nurse that, when she was prevented from enrolling in the practical nursing program in Bogalusa for racial reasons, she commuted to New Orleans daily until she received her nursing license from the Booker T. Washington nursing program; and

WHEREAS, Valeria Hicks practiced nursing in hospitals in New Orleans and St. Tammany Parish until her retirement, in addition to maintaining a reputation as the neighborhood nurse for over fifty years; and

WHEREAS, in addition to her professional accomplishments, Mrs. Hicks has been a lifelong member of the oldest African American Baptist church in Bogalusa, Bethlehem Baptist Church, where she has served as church secretary, Sunday school teacher, and Bible school teacher; and

WHEREAS, as a devoted Christian, Mrs. Hicks is a daily Bible reader who also spends much time in prayer and as a friend and advisor to many; and

WHEREAS, in her spare time, Valeria Hicks volunteers by serving on the Bethlehem Harvest Food Giveaway Committee, an organization that distributes free food to needy individuals and families in Bogalusa, thus evincing her unwavering commitment to caring for the elderly, the sick, and the disadvantaged; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Hicks played a pivotal role in the civil rights movement in Bogalusa by registering African Americans to vote and driving them to the polls, participating in daily marches, traveling to speaking and fund-raising engagements across the country, inviting national civil rights leaders into her home, and housing civil rights workers for lengthy periods of time; and

WHEREAS, during her time as a civil rights activist, Mrs. Hicks participated in the Million Man March, the Million Women March, and the Million Family March, all of which took place in Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, for her commitment and courageous contributions to civil rights, Valeria Hicks was made an honorary deputy with the Washington Parish Sheriff's Office; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Hicks served on the executive board of the Bogalusa Civic and Voters League and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and also assisted her late husband in advocating for the cause of civil rights in Bogalusa; and

WHEREAS, at age ninety, Mrs. Hicks serves as the chief executive officer of the nonprofit Robert "Bob" Hicks Foundation; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Hicks and her family are featured in an oral interviews collection at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture; and

WHEREAS, as a family woman, nurse, church member, community volunteer, and civil rights activist, Valeria Payton Hicks deserves commendation for her immeasurable contributions to the city of Bogalusa and to the state of Louisiana as a whole.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby designate June 8, 2019, as Valeria Payton Hicks Day in Bogalusa and Washington Parish and does hereby commend Mrs. Hicks for her personal,

professional, spiritual, and political contributions to the people of the great state of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Valeria Payton Hicks.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES