

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 23

BY SENATORS BOUDREAUX, ALLAIN, BARROW, BERNARD, BOUIE, CARTER, CATHEY, CLOUD, CONNICK, CORTEZ, FESI, FIELDS, FOIL, HARRIS, HENSGENS, HEWITT, JOHNS, LAMBERT, LUNEAU, MCMATH, MILLIGAN, FRED MILLS, ROBERT MILLS, MIZELL, MORRIS, PEACOCK, POPE, PRICE, REESE, SMITH, TALBOT, TARVER, WARD AND WOMACK

A RESOLUTION

To express the sincere condolences of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the death of Dr. Ray P. Authement, former president of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

WHEREAS, it is with deep regret and profound sorrow that the members of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana have learned of the passing of Dr. Ray P. Authement on April 5, 2020, at the age of ninety-one; and

WHEREAS, Ray Authement was born on November 19, 1928, in Boudreaux Canal in South Louisiana, and from humble beginnings was raised to place a high value on education, family, and faith; and

WHEREAS, as a first-generation college student, he was driven by the desire to ensure that others like him could have the opportunity to experience a first-rate education; and

WHEREAS, his early love for academics led him to leave home and hitchhike to Lafayette to attend the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (ULL), then known as Southwestern Louisiana Institute, where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Physics with a minor in mathematics and went on to earn his master's and doctoral degrees in mathematics from LSU; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Authement spent time as a mathematics instructor at LSU, an associate professor at McNeese State University, then known as McNeese State College, and a visiting professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and

WHEREAS, he joined the ULL faculty as a professor in mathematics in 1957 and dedicated the rest of his career to the university; in 1966 he was named academic vice

president, was promoted to vice president four years later, and in 1973, was a unanimous choice to become the fifth president in the university's history; and

WHEREAS, between 1974 and 2008, Dr. Authement steered Louisiana's second largest university deliberately and confidently, advancing it from a solid regional university to one worthy of national and international attention; and

WHEREAS, although resources were limited, he made smart, bold, and calculated decisions; he invested resources in biology and computer science long before other universities; during the downturn of the 1980s, he led efforts to diversify the area's economy; and, by establishing the 143-acre University Research Park, ULL focused on attracting research centers, scientists, and grant funds to the region and is still home to several national and statewide research centers; and

WHEREAS, the highlights of university achievements under his leadership include changing its name to gain more prestige as the University of Louisiana at Lafayette; implementing academic admissions standards to support more academically prepared students, increasing the prestige of the degree, and achieve better academic outcomes; growing the endowment from \$500,000 to \$122 million, largely through the "Investing in Our Future" campaign during the university's Centennial celebration; raising funds to attract and retain top faculty by establishing twenty \$1 million endowed chairs and 217 \$100,000 endowed professorships; becoming the first Doctoral II University in Louisiana; competing in NCAA's Division I, the highest level of collegiate athletic competition; increasing gifted assets from about \$500,000 to more than \$150 million; receiving national accolades from organizations like the National Science Foundation and the Carnegie Foundation; and earning a strong national reputation in the fields of computer science, environmental and biological research, and Francophone studies; establishing seventeen centers to help create companies, grow jobs, and diversify the economy; and constructing more than thirty buildings and facilities and renovating or expanding more than twenty-five others; and

WHEREAS, among the new buildings, include B.I. Moody Hall (home to the B.I. Moody College of Business Administration), James R. Oliver Hall (home to Advanced Computer Technology and Research Center), the Paul and Lulu Hillard University Art Museum, the Leon Moncla Indoor Practice Facility for Athletics, the Cajundome, and the

Convention Center; and

WHEREAS, because of Dr. Authement's fiscal responsibility, the university became debt-free even as the campus was expanding which enabled him to reward faculty members for their commitment; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Authement retired from the university in 2008 as the longest serving president of any public university in the nation, having served ULL for thirty-four years with fierce dedication as the public face of the university; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his historic contributions, the university renamed the College of Sciences the Ray P. Authement College of Sciences in 2008, and in 2009, the University of Louisiana System named Dr. Authement President Emeritus of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Authement was a faithful member of the Our Lady of Wisdom Parish; and

WHEREAS, he was preceded in death by his parents Elios and Elphia Authement, his oldest sister Nell Page (Charlie), and his daughter Kathy Elizabeth Prouet; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Authement is survived by his wife of sixty-nine years Barbara Braud Authement; a daughter Julie Authement Johnson (Chris); five grandchildren, Jacob and Benjamin Johnson, Philip Prouet (Emily), Lauren Newbill (Wes) and Michelle Prouet; great-grandchildren Graham and Parker Prouet; brothers Don Authement (Suzanne), Ronnie Authement (Jane); and sisters Norma Dill (Gerald, deceased), and Rosalie Tipton (John); and

WHEREAS, he will be remembered as a committed husband, a loving father and grandfather, a humble servant, a passionate visionary, an aggressive fundraiser, an academic steward, and the Ragin' Cajun's biggest sports fan who dedicated his life to enhancing the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and higher education in Louisiana.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby extend sincere and heartfelt condolences to the family, friends, and former colleagues upon the passing of Dr. Ray P. Authement and does hereby recognize and pay posthumous tribute to his contributions made toward the betterment of postsecondary education in Louisiana through the growth and development of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette during his lengthy association as student, educator, and administrator.

**SR NO. 23**

**ENROLLED**

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to  
Barbara Braud Authement.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE