

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 17

BY SENATOR CARTER

A RESOLUTION

To express the sincere condolences of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the death of George V. Rainey, who was the oldest elected king of Zulu, who reigned at Mardi Gras in 2019, and who died at the age of eighty-nine on October 7, 2020.

WHEREAS, George Vertice Rainey was born on October 1, 1931, to the late Louis L. Rainey Sr. and Laura Felix Rainey; and

WHEREAS, George V. Rainey became the oldest elected king of the Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club and as his queen he chose his granddaughter, Kailyn Rainey, the youngest woman and first Louisiana State University (LSU) student to reign as queen of Zulu and she was led in the parade by LSU's famed "Golden Band from Tigerland"; and

WHEREAS, George Rainey was a native New Orleanian and graduated in the first senior class of Booker T. Washington High School in 1949; and

WHEREAS, after service in the United States Army for six years during the Korean War, Mr. Rainey returned home to New Orleans and in 1967 he opened a small restaurant; and

WHEREAS, George Rainey expanded the restaurant and moved it to Algiers, Louisiana, where it prospered and, eventually, "Rainey's Restaurant and Catering" became one of the largest Black-owned restaurants in the city; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Rainey's business flourished and was a well-known vendor at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival and the Essence Festival before closing in 2012; and

WHEREAS, George Rainey was a member of Zulu for forty-five years and he served the organization in nearly every leadership position prior to being elected to serve as king in 2019; and

WHEREAS, when Mr. Rainey joined in 1972, the krewe had only about sixty members and he was elected "Big Shot" in 1986, beginning his years of serving in the

krewe's hierarchy; and

WHEREAS, while serving as vice president from 1991 through 1996, George Rainey founded the club's Lundi Gras Festival, along the Mississippi River at Woldenburg Park, now a popular annual event; and

WHEREAS, the Lundi Gras Festival is held on the Monday before Mardi Gras, when for many years no seasonal events were scheduled; and

WHEREAS, the festival offers live music, food vendors, and the river front arrival of King and Queen Zulu and in 2020 the festival was renamed in honor of its founder, George Rainey; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Rainey was dedicated to the offer of fellowship and the civic commitment to service that were at the heart of the Zulu organization and he served on the board of directors for more than twenty-five years; and

WHEREAS, as a board member, George Rainey led the drive to produce the club's first poster series in 1983 and it is first corporate sponsorship; and

WHEREAS, George Rainey would say he was most proud of Zulu's service to its community, saying "we are embedded in the community, with individuals who are concerned that we play a great part in that community"; and

WHEREAS, in the wake of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, George Rainey returned to New Orleans to help families in need and with a group led by his pastor at the Fischer Community Church and joined by the 82nd Airborne Division Cooks (United States Army), Rainey spent two months preparing and serving food to hungry storm survivors; and

WHEREAS, George Rainey was recognized for his community service efforts by President George W. Bush, New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell, and the Jefferson Award Foundation; and

WHEREAS, George Rainey was preceded in death by his wife, Jeanne Robinson Rainey, and five brothers and left to cherish his memory are his children, Jacquelyn Rainey-Bijou and husband Joseph, Gwendolyn Rainey, Monica Rainey-Washington and husband Andrew, and Oscar J.D. Rainey and wife Joan; brother Larry C. Rainey Sr.; guardian of Corey L. Johnson; six grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; two goddaughters; devoted friend Irma Owens; and a host of nieces, nephews, and sisters-in-law; and

WHEREAS, George Rainey, a man dedicated to his role as a long time member and officer of Zulu, past king, board member, fund raiser for Zulu, restaurateur, community service activist, founder of the Zulu Lundi Gras Festival, and an extraordinary native son of New Orleans, leaves many roles to be filled in the New Orleans community, within the Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club and in the lives of all who were fortunate enough to know him personally.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express sincere condolences upon the death of George V. Rainey, who was the oldest elected king of Zulu reigning at Mardi Gras in 2019, and who died at the age of eighty-nine on October 7, 2020.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the family of George V. Rainey.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE