

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 36

BY SENATORS JOHNS AND ABRAHAM

A RESOLUTION

To express the sincere condolences of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the death of Lady Marilyn "Cissie" Qualls McLeod.

WHEREAS, Lady Marilyn "Cissie" McLeod, known to many family and friends as "Mamma McLeod", "Lady Cissie", "Mimi", or "The Mimster", passed from this life on October 19, 2020, at the age of eighty-three, a living legend in Lake Charles; and

WHEREAS, Cissie McLeod was a classic lady as well known for her cultural endeavors as her quick wit and contagious smile; she possessed an innate self-confidence, pursued many interests, and supported numerous issues and institutions that were very close to her heart; and

WHEREAS, she was a fifth-generation resident of Lake Charles and a member of the A.A. Nelson family, a founding family of the community; and

WHEREAS, Cissie McLeod was raised in the First United Methodist Church and then married the Presbyterian preacher's son, fondly saying that she went into her wedding a Methodist and came out of the church a Presbyterian; and

WHEREAS, she attended Fourth Ward, Central School, and Lake Charles High School, especially loving her high school experience, particularly the Kilties and her outstanding teachers, where she created lifelong friendships; and

WHEREAS, Cissie attended Louisiana State University where she thrived, being elected to serve as president of Mortar Board and realizing her passion for LSU football, particularly as a senior in 1958 when the Tigers won their first national football title; she enthusiastically attended the 2020 national championship game with her childhood friend and LSU roommate, Angell Stockwell Wright, which was a highlight of her life; and

WHEREAS, while at LSU, Cissie joined Chi Omega, the sorority she dearly loved, because of her passion for the cardinal and straw, her adult nickname was "Big Mama Owl", and was delighted when her daughter, Ruth, joined the sorority, even though it was at the University of Alabama; and

WHEREAS, as a young woman, she taught seventh grade English at Central School where her students were impacted by her infectious zest for life and remember her to this day; and

WHEREAS, Cissie was recognized by the Junior League of Lake Charles as Sustainer of the Year for her service to the community, and new Junior League members were inspired by hearing her own brand of the history of Lake Charles; and

WHEREAS, Cissie volunteered with her daughters' schools including Oak Park Elementary, ICCS, and St. Louis, from fundraising for air conditioners for Oak Park in the 70s to coordinating the Harvest Festival and being the Blues Mom at St. Louis in the 80s; she found ways to make a positive impact wherever she was involved; long after her daughters were no longer in school, Cissie was still loving children through her volunteerism; and, through her church, First Presbyterian, she was still volunteering as a lunch buddy and tutor with students at Oak Park until recently; and

WHEREAS, Cissie was married to William L. "Bill" McLeod Jr. who served in the Louisiana Legislature for twenty-three years, the House of Representatives representing Calcasieu and Cameron parishes from 1968 to 1976 and then the state Senate representing District 27 consisting of Calcasieu and Jeff Davis parishes for fifteen years, rising to the chairmanship of the Senate Retirement Committee and dean of the Southwest Louisiana delegation; a member of the reform-minded legislators elected in 1968 called the "Young Turks", he supported and sponsored numerous changes in state government that continue to benefit Louisiana today, and as a senator and committee chairman, his leadership and independence earned him the respect and admiration of his Senate colleagues; he was the pioneer of the "personal legislative visit" with voters for twenty years; prior to legislative sessions, he would set up a card table and folding chairs outside of grocery stores throughout his district to allow constituents to have a one-on-one forum to provide their input on issues of the day; and

WHEREAS, Cissie brought many strengths to her role as a political wife, not the least of which was her excellent memory for names, relationships, and people's stories; some people thought she knew everyone and their family trees in Lake Charles, even the entire state; she was a natural politician and knew how to mobilize others to get things done; she

was once described as the politician behind the statesman; and

WHEREAS, one of her favorite experiences was reigning as Queen Anna XLI of the Krewe of Mystique where she had a grand time celebrating as only Cissie knew how with her family and many friends; and

WHEREAS, Cissie and Bill dearly loved their camp at Big Lake, "Cissie By the Sea", where she enjoyed spending many happy days, especially with her grandchildren at "Camp Mimi"; and

WHEREAS, while Cissie had many health challenges in her life, she never let these difficulties slow her down, keep her from caring for others, or hinder her from enjoying the wonderful foods of Southwest Louisiana beyond doctors' orders; and

WHEREAS, Cissie was preceded in death by her parents, Carroll and Floy Nelson Allen; her brother Kently Qualls; and her husband, The Honorable William Lasater McLeod Jr.; and

WHEREAS, she is survived by three adoring daughters Sara Nelson McLeod Judson (Mark), Martha Ellen McLeod Livanec (Scott), and Ruth McLeod Rohs (Stephen); and grandchildren Rachel McLeod Judson, Marie Louise Livanec, William McLeod Livanec, Caroline Isabel Livanec, William McLeod Rohs, and Katherine Elizabeth Rohs; and

WHEREAS, Cissie McLeod was a great lady who will be sorely missed by her community and state and will always be remembered for her love of family, many passions in life, and her accomplishments resulted in a most fascinating and distinguished life.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby extend heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of Marilyn "Cissie" Qualls McLeod, wife, mother, community leader, and volunteer who set an extraordinary standard of graciousness and good citizenship for all to emulate.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to her three daughters Sara Nelson McLeod Judson, Martha Ellen McLeod Livanec, and Ruth McLeod Rohs.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE