

2021 Regular Session

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 36

BY SENATOR JOHNS

CONDOLENCES. Expresses condolences upon the death of Col. Bernard H. McLaughlin Jr.

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 To express the sincere condolences of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the death of
3 Colonel Bernard H. McLaughlin Jr.

4 WHEREAS, it is with deep regret and profound sorrow that the members of the
5 Legislature of Louisiana have learned of the passing of Colonel Bernard H. "Bernie"
6 McLaughlin Jr. on February 28, 2021, at age sixty-nine, after a brief but hard-fought battle
7 with acute myeloid leukemia; and

8 WHEREAS, born in Darby, Pennsylvania, on September 19, 1951, Bernie was raised
9 in Cocoa Beach, Florida, and often spoke about growing up with the children of NASA's
10 scientist and astronauts; and

11 WHEREAS, the McLaughlin family home was situated on the beach and his early
12 ambition was to be a professional surfer, an idea he would laughingly say his parents did not
13 encourage; and

14 WHEREAS, gifted in both academics and athletics, he was an AAU swimmer,
15 winning many awards and honors and it was this combination that brought him to Louisiana
16 as a member of Louisiana State University's swim team; and

17 WHEREAS, while at LSU, Bernie was a member of Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity,
18 was an honors graduate, received a Bachelor of Arts in history and political science, earned

1 a Juris Doctor from the Paul M. Hebert School of Law, and was a member of the LSU Law
2 Review; and

3 WHEREAS, he worked offshore during the summers of his college and law school
4 years as a means to pay his tuition and living expenses; and

5 WHEREAS, Bernie also managed the LSU Athletic Department's academic tutoring
6 program which provided him with an athletic scholarship to attend law school; and

7 WHEREAS, he moved to Lake Charles in 1976 to work with Oliver Stockwell, who
8 would become his mentor, and was later named a partner at Stockwell Sievert Law Firm; and

9 WHEREAS, Mr. Stockwell introduced Bernie to duck hunting which would become
10 one of his lifelong passions; he rarely missed an opportunity to spend time hunting in the
11 marshes of Cameron Parish; and during duck season, it was not unusual to find Bernie
12 shooting a limit in the blind at daybreak then appearing in court dressed in a suit and tie by
13 10 A.M.; and

14 WHEREAS, he loved the practice of law and received Martindale-Hubbell's AV
15 rating, a peer-reviewed designation indicating the highest level of professionalism; and

16 WHEREAS, Bernie found his perfect niche when he moved to a practice as a
17 full-time mediator and spent countless hours preparing for each mediation, taking great pride
18 in doing all he could to bring each case to a resolution; and

19 WHEREAS, he held himself to the highest standard and gave his foremost effort on
20 each of the nearly four thousand cases he mediated through the years; and

21 WHEREAS, Bernie was acknowledged as an excellent mediator but an even better
22 person, a warrior but was always a gentleman; and

23 WHEREAS, he loved three things: his country, the practice of law, and most
24 importantly, his family; and

25 WHEREAS, Bernie was a great storyteller, a professional, and always spoke with
26 such pride about his wife, his two sons, and their accomplishments; and

27 WHEREAS, he was a mentor, friend, and role model to many in the legal
28 community; and

29 WHEREAS, throughout his life, Bernie believed that, "A man's highest honor is to
30 do his duty for his country"; and

1 WHEREAS, he accepted a commission as a Judge Advocate in the Louisiana Army
2 National Guard and his devotion to his country, state, and fellow Guardsmen was
3 unparalleled; and

4 WHEREAS, Bernie served during Operation Desert Storm and in 2004 was selected
5 to be part of the special task force during Operation Iraqi Freedom that assisted in creating
6 the Iraqi court system, for which he was awarded the Bronze Star; and

7 WHEREAS, over his years in the Guard, he was also awarded the Meritorious
8 Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Iraq Campaign
9 Medal, Global War on Terrorism Served Medal, NATO Service Medal, among others; and

10 WHEREAS, Bernie was a graduate of the Judge Advocate General School, U. S.
11 Army Combined Arms, and Service Staff College and U.S. Army Command, and General
12 Staff College and was awarded the Royal Thai Army parachute badge, Russian parachute
13 badge, Israeli Defense Forces parachutist badge, and the Royal Jordanian Army parachute
14 badge; and

15 WHEREAS, his service in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina garnered the
16 attention of author Douglas Brinkley who included Bernie's experiences in his bestselling
17 book *The Great Deluge*; and

18 WHEREAS, those who served with him coined the term "Combat JAG" to describe
19 Bernie because he so loved the excitement of the infantry; and

20 WHEREAS, Bernie was a member of the Krewe of Contraband, Krewe of Barataria,
21 and was honored as a Duke by the Krewe of Mystique; and

22 WHEREAS, he was an avid dog lover, owning many English Setters, Irish Setters,
23 Gordon Setters, and American Water Spaniels through the years; and

24 WHEREAS, Bernie was P.O.S.T. certified and served as a volunteer member of the
25 Welsh, Louisiana Police Department; and

26 WHEREAS, he loved his life in Southwest Louisiana and the special bond he had
27 with so many friends and often spoke about how he had lived his life to the fullest and
28 reminded us that in the end, the only regrets are chances not taken; and

29 WHEREAS, Bernie was preceded in death by his father, Dr. Bernard McLaughlin
30 Sr.; and

1 WHEREAS, he is survived by his wife of twenty-eight years, Elizabeth Spiller
2 McLaughlin; their sons, Connor Jordan and Stratton Foy McLaughlin; his mother, Charlotte
3 Foy McLaughlin; and siblings Patti Cummins (Joe), Cathy Champion (Ken), Dr. Michael
4 McLaughlin (Donna), Charlotte McLaughlin, and Alicia Loving (Jon); many nieces and
5 nephews, as well as his beloved English Setter, Taser; and

6 WHEREAS, Bernard H. McLaughlin Jr., an attorney, a judge, a soldier, a family
7 man, and a leading citizen of Lake Charles, Louisiana, leaves a legacy of excellence and
8 commitment to his family, his faith, the law, his state, and the nation which marks a long
9 life, well lived; and

10 WHEREAS, the strength of our communities and the overall vitality of American
11 society depend, in great measure, upon men like Bernard H. McLaughlin Jr. who use their
12 talents and resources to leave a legacy to benefit future generations.

13 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
14 acknowledge the remarkable life and the unique and special contributions and
15 accomplishments of Bernard H. McLaughlin Jr., record for posterity the extraordinary
16 dedication and commitment to the law and to his country that he displayed throughout his
17 life, and extend sincere condolences to his family upon the occasion of his death.

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to
19 Elizabeth Spiller McLaughlin.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Jerry J. Guillot.

SCR 36 Original DIGEST 2021 Regular Session Johns

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