

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 36

BY SENATOR JOHNS

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, while at LSU, Bernie was a member of Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity,  
was an honors graduate, received a Bachelor of Arts in history and political science, earned  
a Juris Doctor from the Paul M. Hebert School of Law, and was a member of the LSU Law  
Review; and

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

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

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

WHEREAS, Mr. Stockwell introduced Bernie to duck hunting which would become

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES