

2024 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 162

BY SENATOR LUNEAU

COMMENDATIONS. Commends and recognizes the outstanding contributions of Sharon Turcan Gahagan to the Louisiana School of Math, Science, and the Arts and honors the dedication of the Sharon Turcan Gahagan Art Gallery.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To commend and recognize the outstanding contributions of Sharon Turcan Gahagan to the
3 Louisiana School of Math, Science, and the Arts and to honor the dedication of the
4 Sharon Turcan Gahagan Art Gallery.

5 WHEREAS, on May 18, 2024, the Sharon Turcan Gahagan Art Gallery was
6 dedicated during the 40th Commencement Exercises of the Louisiana School for Math,
7 Science, and the Arts (LSMSA); and

8 WHEREAS, the gallery was named in Sharon Gahagan's honor by the LSMSA Board
9 of Directors in recognition of her unwavering commitment to education, her illustrious
10 career, her dedication to her family, and her significant contributions to LSMSA; and

11 WHEREAS, Sharon was awarded an honorary Louisiana School diploma and was
12 named Board Chair Emeritus, a first in LSMSA history, in a presentation led by LSMSA
13 Executive Director Dr. Steven Horton; and

14 WHEREAS, Sharon served under six Louisiana governors and guided six executive
15 directors, demonstrating her enduring dedication and exceptional leadership; and

16 WHEREAS, a native of Baton Rouge, Sharon earned a Bachelor of Science degree
17 in speech and hearing therapy from Louisiana State University in 1968, and began her
18 distinguished career as a teacher at the Louisiana School for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired;

1 and

2 WHEREAS, she furthered her education with a master's and specialist degrees from
3 Northwestern State University and established and directed the Natchitoches/Northwestern
4 Program for the Hearing Impaired before later entering private practice in speech and
5 hearing therapy; and

6 WHEREAS, Sharon Gahagan significantly contributed to numerous civic
7 organizations, including being a founding member of the Natchitoches ARC, a founding
8 board member of the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame, and holding various leadership roles
9 in the Natchitoches Service League, Natchitoches-Northwestern Symphony Society, Friends
10 of Louisiana Public Broadcasting, and the Natchitoches Historic District Development
11 Commission; and

12 WHEREAS, Sharon was named a Natchitoches Treasure by the City of Natchitoches
13 in 2014 and she received the Natchitoches Chamber of Commerce Lifetime Achievement
14 Award in 2020; and

15 WHEREAS, in 1989, Sharon was appointed to the LSMSA Board of Directors by
16 Governor Buddy Roemer, and she served as chairperson from 1997 until her retirement in
17 December 2023, advocating tirelessly for the completion of LSMSA's long-term master
18 plan; and

19 WHEREAS, under her leadership, the construction of the 50,000-square-foot Center
20 for Performance and Technology (CPT) was completed, housing the Sharon Turcan Gahagan
21 Art Gallery, and she oversaw the restoration of the original Natchitoches Trade School
22 building into the Music and Arts Building (MAB); and

23 WHEREAS, Sharon Gahagan's advocacy led to the funding and construction of the
24 Living and Learning Commons (LLC), a 110,000-square-foot residential life center for
25 LSMSA's students, with over \$40 million in state funds secured for these projects during her
26 tenure; and

27 WHEREAS, Sharon and her husband, Henry Cole Gahagan Jr., are blessed with three
28 children, Kristen Gahagan Weber, Henry Cole Gahagan III, and Jensen Gahagan Sessums,
29 and six grandchildren.

30 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana

