

2025 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 129

BY SENATOR BOUDREAUX

CONDOLENCES. To express sincere and heartfelt condolences to the family and former students and players of James W. Simmons Jr. on the occasion of his passing.

A RESOLUTION

To express the sincere and heartfelt condolences of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the passing of James W. Simmons Jr., a beloved coach, athletic director, educator, and mentor who dedicated more than five decades to influencing high school athletics and shaping young lives throughout the Acadiana region and beyond.

WHEREAS, it is with deep regret and reverence that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana learned of the passing of James W. Simmons Jr., on Sunday, May 11, 2025, at the age of seventy-seven; and

WHEREAS, born on October 27, 1947, in Abbeville, Louisiana, to Reverend James W. Simmons Sr. and Wanda Armstrong Simmons, James Simmons was a devoted family man, veteran, educator, coach, and public servant who committed his life to the service of others; and

WHEREAS, James graduated from Jonas Henderson High School in New Iberia, where he excelled as a student-athlete, participating in baseball, football, and track, and displaying an early passion for sports and statistics that foreshadowed his legendary career; and

WHEREAS, he pursued higher education at Southern University, where he met the

1 love of his life, Mary Evelyn, with whom he shared a joyful union and raised one cherished
2 daughter, Jamie; and

3 WHEREAS, James proudly served in the Army National Guard and, following his
4 honorable discharge, began a lifelong commitment to youth development and athletics, first
5 as a teacher and coach at Crowley High School in 1970, and later at Acadiana High School
6 beginning in 1983; and

7 WHEREAS, known simply and fondly by generations as "Coach Simmons", he made
8 a lasting impact through his leadership in football, basketball, and especially track and field,
9 where his passion and excellence earned him district, regional, and state titles and wide
10 respect among peers and students alike; and

11 WHEREAS, in 1990, James Simmons made history as the first Black Athletic
12 Director of Lafayette Parish School System, a role he held with great distinction for
13 twenty-three years, expanding access and resources for all sports and championing equity
14 and integrity in student athletics; and

15 WHEREAS, Coach Simmons was renowned not only for his technical knowledge
16 and leadership, but also for his unwavering professionalism, mentorship, and ability to
17 inspire both students and fellow coaches, as well as for always doing things "the right way";
18 and

19 WHEREAS, following his retirement from the school system in 2013, he remained
20 active in athletics, serving as a Louisiana High School Athletic Association auditor,
21 officiating track meets at the state and national levels, and continuing to guide and support
22 student-athletes and programs across Louisiana; and

23 WHEREAS, he pioneered essential reforms, including the introduction of qualified
24 trainers in Lafayette Parish schools and improved collaboration between local recreation
25 departments and school systems, advancing both safety and participation in youth sports; and

26 WHEREAS, Coach Simmons' lifetime of commitment and excellence was formally
27 recognized through his inductions into the Louisiana High School Sports Hall of Fame in
28 2012 and the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) Hall
29 of Fame in 2015; and

30 WHEREAS, his national leadership included service on the NIAAA Board of

1 Directors, NIAAA Strategic Planning Committee, National High School Hall of Fame
2 Steering Committee, and AAU Infraction Committee, where he helped shape policy and
3 uphold standards of excellence in interscholastic athletics; and

4 WHEREAS, those who knew James Simmons -including friends, colleagues, and
5 countless student-athletes - remember him not only as a coach but as a role model, father
6 figure, man of faith, and symbol of integrity who left an indelible mark on every community
7 he touched; and

8 WHEREAS, Coach Simmons' legacy lives on in the generations of young people
9 whose lives he transformed through encouragement, accountability, and love, and his
10 example continues to inspire those who strive to lead with purpose and serve with honor.

11 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana
12 does hereby express its profound sorrow upon the passing of James W. Simmons Jr., does
13 hereby recognize and celebrate his lifetime of service to youth, athletics, and education; and
14 does hereby offer its deepest condolences to his family, former students and athletes, and the
15 entire Acadiana community who mourn his loss.

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to his
17 daughter Jamie M. Simmons.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Senate Legislative Services.
The keyword, summary, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof
or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

	DIGEST	
SR 129 Original	2025 Regular Session	Boudreaux
Expresses condolences upon the passing of James W. Simmons Jr.		