

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 130

BY SENATORS ALARIO, ADLEY, ALLAIN, AMEDEE, APPEL, BROOME, BROWN, BUFFINGTON, CHABERT, CLAITOR, CORTEZ, CROWE, DONAHUE, DORSEY-COLOMB, ERDEY, GALLOT, GUILLORY, HEITMEIER, JOHNS, KOSTELKA, LAFLEUR, LONG, MARTINY, MILLS, MORRELL, MORRISH, MURRAY, NEVERS, PEACOCK, PERRY, PETERSON, RISER, GARY SMITH, JOHN SMITH, TARVER, THOMPSON, WALSWORTH, WARD AND WHITE

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To express the sincere condolences of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the passing of former state budget director and dedicated public servant, Ralph Perlman, and to commemorate a life well spent in service to his country and his state, and to note the proud legacy he leaves to its citizens.

WHEREAS, it is with deep sadness that the Legislature of Louisiana has learned of the death of Ralph Perlman on May 24, 2013, eight days after his ninety-sixth birthday; and

WHEREAS, he was born in New York, New York, on May 16, 1917, a first generation American born to European immigrants, Harry and Bessie Perlman; and

WHEREAS, after graduation from high school, he earned an undergraduate degree from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, and then obtained a master's degree in Business from Columbia University in New York City; and

WHEREAS, in the midst of World War II with enlistment in the military as an officer, Ralph Perlman came south to Camp Van Dorn, a United States Army Post located near Centreville, Mississippi; there he met his future spouse, a southern lady named Carole Herzberg, with whom he shared a dance and the next four decades of his life until her untimely death in 1981; he served with distinction in the European Theater as an artillery officer with the Sixty-third Infantry Division; and

WHEREAS, at the conclusion of World War II and honorably discharged from military service, Ralph established a home in Baton Rouge and went into business; and

WHEREAS, with a keen mind for facts and figures and an acute sense for fiscal discipline, Ralph first entered the realm of state government in 1964 when he went to work for Governor John J. McKeithen as the governor's executive assistant to the commissioner

of administration within the Division of Administration and thus began a distinguished career in state government that would last over forty years; and

WHEREAS, in 1967, he became state budget director within the office of Planning and Budget and held that position for more than twenty-one years; and

WHEREAS, as the state's budget director he was responsible for financial analysis and budget development for all state agencies and departments within the executive branch; other exemplary accomplishments included the development of the Office of State Group Insurance, which provided life and health policies for state employees, and his oversight of the five million dollar investment of state funds in the development of the 1984 World's Fair held in New Orleans; and

WHEREAS, Ralph Perlman was responsible for training more than seventy-five budget analysts over his career; many of whom are presently in the highest ranks of public finance in state government; and

WHEREAS, as new employees came under his tutelage, Mr. Perlman advised them to obtain firsthand knowledge of the fiscal needs of each assigned budget unit with a field visit, to become familiar with its accounting personnel, funding sources, and budget expenditures, to become a steward of the financial needs of that state agency, and to make every effort possible to secure essential funding; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Perlman, at times, had a gruff exterior and could be "a very tough cookie" when guarding the state fisc as if it were his own personal budget, but he also had a tender heart when it came to the securing of funds for the disadvantaged, the infirm, the elderly, and the downtrodden; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Perlman had an amusing side to his character; he was always ready to diffuse a tense budget negotiation with a joke that could be delivered with the rapier wit of Buddy Hackett and the timing of Henny Youngman; and

WHEREAS, Ralph Perlman had a penchant for colorful neckties and fine cigars; that image of him puffing away on that ever-present corona while he "smoked out" the facts has been indelibly imprinted in the memories of whomever appeared before him with a budget request; and

WHEREAS, in 1980, the Senate of Louisiana began a pilot project to create a

computerized appropriations and capital outlay database; when the operation needed a designation, then Senate Secretary Mike Baer suggested RALPH, an acronym that stood for "Research Analysis for Louisiana programs and Histories," a subtle tribute paid to the analytical expertise of Ralph Perlman, and for many years, all of the Senate's computer systems were simply known as R.A.L.P.H.; and

WHEREAS, in 1988, Mr. Perlman became the special assistant for finance under three gubernatorial administrations, governors Roemer, Edwards, and Foster; he was also appointed by Governor Mike Foster to become secretary of the Louisiana Gaming Control Board where he served from 1997 until 2002; and

WHEREAS, in 2002, he became a special assistant to the University of Louisiana System President Sally Clausen, who remembered Ralph Perlman with fond affection as a "magician in common sense" tempered with honesty and great diligence; and

WHEREAS, after retirement Ralph Perlman relished his leisure time and took great pleasure in spoiling his grandchildren, who referred to him lovingly as "Honey"; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, Mr. Perlman was proudly inducted into the Louisiana Political Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, Ralph Perlman is survived by his devoted wife of twenty-nine years, Billie Perlman, a son, Jerry Perlman, a daughter, Ann Mitchell, numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and a host of close friends; and

WHEREAS, Ralph Perlman was an extraordinary man of copious achievements, a man of great intellect, a caring individual who has left an indelible mark on the fiscal controls and budgetary procedures that state government exercises today.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express sincere and heartfelt condolences upon the passing of Ralph Perlman, former State Budget Director, and does hereby commend his significant contributions to state government, his commitment to budgetary excellence, his friendship, his leadership, and the able assistance that he so generously imparted to all who worked with him.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby recollect his forty years of invaluable public service in state government and does hereby commemorate the rich legacy that he leaves to the benefit of future generations.

SCR NO. 130

ENROLLED

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to his widow, Mrs. Billie Perlman.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES