

2018 Second Extraordinary Session

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 15

BY SENATOR ALARIO

CONDOLENCES. Expresses condolences upon the death of Dr. Billy A. Cannon Sr.

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A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To express the sincere condolences of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the death of
Dr. Billy A. Cannon Sr.

WHEREAS, it is with deep regret and profound sorrow that the citizens learned of
the death of Dr. Billy A. Cannon Sr. on May 20, 2018, at the age of eighty; and

WHEREAS, William "Billy" Abb Cannon Sr. was born in Philadelphia, Mississippi,
on August 2, 1937; and

WHEREAS, his family moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in the 1940s, where he
attended Istrouma High School, excelled in sports, and met his high school sweetheart
Dorothy "Dot" Dupuy Cannon; and

WHEREAS, he enrolled at Louisiana State University (LSU) in the fall of 1956 and
married the love of his life, Dot, on November 23rd that same year; and

WHEREAS, Billy Cannon was an athletic phenom at the time, standing six feet one
inch and weighing nearly two hundred pounds; and

WHEREAS, what set him apart was not only his size, but his speed and agility, and
he and his teammates were some of the first to begin weight training which added to his
strength and made him an unstoppable force on the field; and

WHEREAS, he ran track and played football at LSU and was an outstanding student

1 maintaining a B+ average; and

2 WHEREAS, Billy Cannon is known for wearing Number 20 and for the "Halloween
3 Run", an eighty-nine yard punt return against the Ole Miss Rebels in Tiger Stadium
4 in 1958; and

5 WHEREAS, that year, he and his teammates, whom he adored, went undefeated and
6 won LSU's first national championship; and

7 WHEREAS, in 1959, Billy Cannon won the Heisman Trophy and is the only player
8 in the history of LSU to have achieved that distinction; and

9 WHEREAS, he went on to play professional football for eleven years for the
10 Houston Oilers, Oakland Raiders, and Kansas City Chiefs, and was the first player to garner
11 all-pro honors in two different positions; and

12 WHEREAS, during the off seasons, he attended the Dental School at Loyola of
13 Chicago and the University of Tennessee, earning both a Doctor of Dental Surgery and
14 Master of Science; and

15 WHEREAS, in addition to being an outstanding athlete, Billy Cannon was a
16 wonderful father; and

17 WHEREAS, he and Dot had five children and to his family, he was simply "Daddy";
18 and

19 WHEREAS, Billy Cannon was a brilliant historian, had a mind like a steel trap, and
20 a wicked sense of humor; and

21 WHEREAS, he knew how to have a good time and could be a rascal at times, but
22 more importantly, he had many friends and was extremely loyal to them; and

23 WHEREAS, Billy Cannon also worked at the Louisiana State Penitentiary as a
24 dentist for twenty-two years, retiring in January 2018; and

25 WHEREAS, he helped reform a failing medical and dental program at the prison,
26 and, although he was not blind to inmates' crimes, he believed every inmate had worth and
27 deserved kindness; and

28 WHEREAS, Billy Cannon believed in humanity and lobbied to get the pharmacy
29 back to the prison when it was decentralized and took weeks to get the medications the
30 inmates needed; and

1 WHEREAS, he also had a love of thoroughbred horses and purchased his first one
2 in California in the early 1960s; and

3 WHEREAS, having purchased many over the years, he enjoyed raising them at his
4 farm in St. Francisville, Louisiana, and would often sit in a lounge chair outside of the stall
5 and help the mares deliver their foals; and

6 WHEREAS, Billy A Cannon Sr. is survived by his loving wife, Dorothy "Dot"
7 Cannon; children, Terri Cannon Byrd, Gina Cannon McWilliams, Dara Cannon Kelsoe,
8 Billy Cannon Jr., and Bunnie Cannon; eight grandchildren, Kimberly Kelsoe Becker,
9 Cannon McWilliams, Laci McWilliams Gentry, Cassie Cannon Graham, Jessie Cannon
10 Black, Abbie Cannon, Mandie Cannon, and Billie Cannon; and eight great-grandchildren;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, he was preceded in death by his parents, Harvey W. Cannon Sr. and
13 Virgie Savell Cannon; and his older brother, Harvey W. Cannon Jr.; and

14 WHEREAS, LSU meant more to Billy Cannon than anyone could ever know; it was
15 not the awards or the acknowledgments on the football field, it was that his life was
16 intertwined with the purple and gold; and

17 WHEREAS, with the death of Dr. Billy A. Cannon Sr., Louisiana has lost one of its
18 finest sons, a quintessential southern gentleman who loved the Louisiana State University
19 fans and family, and whose accomplishments have left an indelible mark upon the Baton
20 Rouge community, the state of Louisiana, and the United States of America; and

21 WHEREAS, his death has left a substantial void in the Baton Rouge community and
22 a sense of loss in the citizens whose lives he touched, and his memory shall live forever in
23 the minds and hearts of all those who knew and loved this remarkable gentleman.

24 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
25 express sincere and heartfelt condolences upon the death of Dr. Billy A. Cannon Sr., record
26 for posterity his outstanding achievements, and extend enduring appreciation for the
27 tremendous pride and honor that he will forever bring to the Baton Rouge and LSU
28 communities, the state of Louisiana, and the United States of America.

29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
30 family of Dr. Billy A. Cannon Sr.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Nancy Vicknair.

DIGEST

SCR 15 Original

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