

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 25

BY SENATOR FOIL

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To commend Mrs. Lydia Smith Grant on the occasion of her 95th birthday on April 25, 2022.

WHEREAS, it is a distinguished privilege for the Legislature of Louisiana to congratulate Lydia Smith Grant on her extraordinary life and honor her as not only a survivor, but also as a vibrant and productive resident of her community; and

WHEREAS, Lydia Smith was born on April 25, 1927, in Bath, Maine, where both her father and grandfather were bankers; Lydia's stepfather attended the United States Naval Academy, and in 1938, was assigned for duty to the U.S. Naval Base Pearl Harbor near Honolulu, Hawaii; and while her family was living on the naval base, she once had the famed actress Shirley Temple attend her birthday party; and

WHEREAS, at the invitation of the Captain Franklin Van Valkenburgh who was her stepfather's roommate while attending the Naval Academy and known to her as "Uncle Van", Lydia planned to have dinner and watch a movie with her friends on board the USS Arizona on the evening of December 7, 1941; and

WHEREAS, the dinner was not to be as just before 8:00 a.m. on that morning at the young age of fourteen, Lydia witnessed first-hand the surprise attack by Japanese forces on Pearl Harbor and the mass devastation resulting therefrom; and

WHEREAS, bombs from the Japanese fighter planes strafed the quarters where Lydia and her family lived as well as the road in front of their quarters that was being used by sailors attempting to get back to their ships; and

WHEREAS, following the attack, Lydia was evacuated to the United States where she endured rationing and other restrictions, and for Lydia and her family, it was especially difficult to witness the stateside populace not nearly as deeply moved by the attack on Pearl Harbor as the survivors; and

WHEREAS, in the weeks and months following the attack, there were many charity events held to help recovery efforts and Lydia distinctly recalls the emotional flashback she felt when a false alarm of a subsequent Japanese attack occurred during her attendance at one of the events; and

WHEREAS, when World War II ended, at a celebration taking place in Washington, D.C., Lydia had the opportunity to meet the great American army general and Nobel Peace Prize recipient, General George C. Marshall; and

WHEREAS, at a ceremony in July 2016, to commemorate the 73rd anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, Mrs. Grant recounted to dozens of residents and veterans who gathered aboard the USS Kidd in Baton Rouge, her harrowing story of Japanese fighter planes swooping overhead and her family's efforts to survive the multitude of bomb strikes; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Grant is part of the original group that started the Salvation Army Women's Auxiliary, and she is one of the original thirteen founding members of Trinity Episcopal Church in Baton Rouge; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Lydia Smith Grant merits a special measure of recognition for the astounding pride and purpose she brings to her community, family, friends, and state.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend and congratulate Lydia Smith Grant on the occasion of her 95th birthday, does hereby recognize her extraordinary life experiences, and wishes her a full measure of happiness for years to come.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Mrs. Lydia Smith Grant.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES