

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 36

BY SENATOR MILKOVICH AND REPRESENTATIVE EDMONDS

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To express the sincere condolences of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the death of William P. Black Sr. of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, known for his decades-long children's television persona, Buckskin Bill.

WHEREAS, William P. Black Sr. of Baton Rouge was most widely known as "Buckskin Bill", host of local programming for children's television; and

WHEREAS, Bill Black was born in 1929 in Haileyville, Oklahoma, to Harvey and Amelia Black and he died peacefully on Wednesday, January 10, 2018, at his home in Baton Rouge; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Black graduated from Classen High School in Oklahoma City, attended Oklahoma A & M, which would officially become Oklahoma State University in 1957, and received a bachelor's degree in speech with a minor in history from Arkansas State College; and

WHEREAS, while in college in Arkansas, Bill Black met Elma, who would become the love of his life, and the two married in April 1952, beginning an amazing life of love the two shared for more than six decades and they were the proud parents of three children: Ann, Bucky, and Ginger; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Black served honorably in the United States Army during the Korean War era, during which he traveled around the country as an emcee and entertainer, boosting the morale of troops across the country; and

WHEREAS, in 1955, Bill and Elma Black moved to Baton Rouge where Bill began his career as a broadcaster and television entertainer and later in that year, the local television program, an outgrowth of Black's local television program "Storyland", "The Buckskin Bill Show" debuted in 1955 to entertain children across the broadcast area; and

WHEREAS, the program was aired until 1988 and at the time it was taken off the air it was the longest running children's family television program in the nation; and

WHEREAS, the foundation of the program was the education of children and Bill Black used his platform to inspire his young viewers to take part in calling for several important civic improvements in the Baton Rouge area, including the establishment of a local zoo, promotion of the Louisiana School for the Deaf, and advocacy for the Boy Scouts of America, as examples; and

WHEREAS, for fifteen years, Bill Black ended his program on WAFB-TV with the slogan, "Baton Rouge needs a zoo", encouraging his audience to become a voice in the community, a lesson that many of his young viewers took to heart as they grew up in Baton Rouge; and

WHEREAS, the Baton Rouge Zoo became a reality on Easter Sunday of 1970 and shortly thereafter, Buckskin Bill Black began the "Elephant March" on his program, urging his young watchers to save their pennies and donate them to the zoo to purchase two elephants; with a total collection of 650,000 pennies, or 6,500 dollars, the elephants were purchased for the zoo and appropriately named "Penny" and "Penny Too"; and

WHEREAS, Bill Black's legacy lives on beyond his years as a beloved television personality with the current mascot at the zoo being named "Penny"; and

WHEREAS, the well-being of children beyond their own was always a passion for the Blacks as a couple and Elma, who as a parenting and drug abuse specialist, helped found the "I Care" program in the East Baton Rouge Parish schools, a program that provides drug, violence, and crisis counseling throughout the parish and which has been a successful program for decades; and

WHEREAS, Bill Black retired from television in 1990, but reentered public life in 1994 when he was elected to the East Baton Rouge Parish School Board, where he served until 2010; and

WHEREAS, throughout his life, Bill Black was singled out for his good citizenship and his concern for the community, including accolades from the National Association of Broadcasters; Baton Rouge's highest civic honor, the Golden Deeds award; and he received the Baton Rouge Council on Human Relations' annual Humanitarian Award; and

WHEREAS, while affecting his community in countless positive ways, Bill Black became a beloved personality around the city with legions of adults who grew up enjoying

his program and enlisting in his causes, all expressing devotion to a man who taught them countless lessons in good citizenship, even beyond the action of collecting pennies.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express sincere condolences upon the death of William P. Black Sr. of Baton Rouge, known for his decades-long children's television persona, Buckskin Bill and his years of community service.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the family of Bill Black.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES