

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 44

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

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To commend and congratulate Ashton Phelps Jr. upon his retirement as publisher of the New Orleans Times-Picayune and as president of The Times-Picayune Publishing Corporation and for his many contributions made to the state of Louisiana.

WHEREAS, it is altogether fitting and proper that the Legislature of Louisiana acknowledges Mr. Phelps' thirty-three years of superb leadership and outstanding journalism while at the helm of The Times-Picayune, a publication with local, national, and international circulation; and

WHEREAS, since 1979, Ashton Phelps has been at the top rung of the publishing giant and during its 175 year history, his family has been associated with the newspaper for five generations; his great-grandfather and father were also publishers with the paper; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Phelps attributes the success of this daily publication to the loyalty of its readership, its advertisers, its faithful, talented, and capable employees, and the steadfast support of its owners, the Newhouse family; and

WHEREAS, as publisher, Ashton Phelps adopted new strategies that changed its focus and operation to better reflect the demands of a diverse metropolitan landscape, with the expansion of Internet access and digital media, such as NOLA.com, to keep pace in the challenging realm of telecommunications; and

WHEREAS, he expanded all of the bureaus to enhance the individuality of the local news in suburban centers, such as Algiers, New Orleans East, Harahan, Gretna, Kenner, Lakefront, Marrero, Metairie, Midtown, Uptown, Westwego, the River Parishes, St. Bernard, and north of Lake Pontchartrain to include Covington, Mandeville, and Slidell; and

WHEREAS, his creativity and dedication have resulted in a constant Number One national ranking among publications in its market demographic; and

WHEREAS, in 1992, at his alma mater, Tulane University Law School, the Phelps Lecture Series was established to honor the legacy of his father, Ashton Phelps Sr. and remains dedicated to the application and preservation of First Amendment rights and related fields of constitutional law; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure, The Times-Picayune garnered four Pulitzer Prizes, in 1997, one Pulitzer for "Oceans of Trouble", an analysis of the threatened global fish supply and a second for editorial cartooning; in 2005, receipt of a Pulitzer for news coverage during Hurricane Katrina, plus the George Polk Award for Metropolitan Reporting, as well as two more Pulitzer Prizes in 2006; and

WHEREAS, for over three decades, Ashton Phelps has handled high-profile stories and editorial topics with quiet aplomb; however, Mr. Phelps, The Times-Picayune, and the city of New Orleans itself, will forever be defined by the events of August 2005, and the aftermath that continues to this day, when Hurricane Katrina knocked the city to its knees; and

WHEREAS, Ashton Phelps, along with reporters and employees, remained in place for forty-eight hours to capture many of the historic details in images and print and to continue to report the news during this catastrophe, a precious touchstone for a region in perilous straits; evacuated to Baton Rouge in the back of delivery trucks, The Times-Picayune personnel maintained a continuous stream of vital information, either via Internet or publications temporarily printed in Baton Rouge, until six weeks later, when the Howard Avenue presses rolled again; Times-Picayune was one of the first businesses to resume operations; and

WHEREAS, the population of the city of New Orleans and the state of Louisiana owe a debt of gratitude to Ashton Phelps for his years of leadership as publisher of the New Orleans Times-Picayune, for his many contributions to the betterment of this state, and his continued efforts to preserve America's First Amendment rights of freedom of speech and of the press.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend and congratulate Ashton Phelps Jr. upon his retirement as publisher of the New Orleans Times-Picayune and as president of The Times-Picayune Publishing

Corporation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby wish for him continued success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Ashton Phelps Jr.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES