

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 173

BY SENATOR WHITE

A RESOLUTION

To express the sincere condolences of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the death of James "Jim" Edwin Champagne.

WHEREAS, it is with great sadness that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana has learned of the passing of James "Jim" Edwin Champagne; and

WHEREAS, on the afternoon of Sunday, April 2, 2023, at the age of 79, Denham Springs resident James "Jim" Edwin Champagne passed away; and

WHEREAS, Jim Champagne's passing follows closely behind that of his beloved wife, Darlene Reinert Champagne, who passed on March 13, 2023; and

WHEREAS, Jim Champagne was born on March 12, 1944, to Edwin C. "Brother" Champagne and Margret "Peggy" Atkin Champagne in Laurel, Maryland; and

WHEREAS, Jim grew up in Baton Rouge, was a 1962 graduate of Catholic High School, and served five years in the Louisiana National Guard; and

WHEREAS, Jim was a graduate of the Northwestern University of Traffic Institute in Evanston, Illinois, and he also held a bachelor of arts degree from Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, Jim Champagne had a long and distinguished career as a Louisiana State Trooper serving twenty-one years, seven months, and twenty-three days, and retiring at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel; and

WHEREAS, in 1996, Jim Champagne was appointed Louisiana's Governor's Highway Safety Representative (GR) and as chairman of the Governor's Highway Safety Association; Jim's dedication and perseverance resulted in countless lives being saved; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure, Jim Champagne passionately advocated for highway safety changes in Louisiana, despite a socio-economic culture that was challenging to highway safety and a pervasive attitude of permissiveness toward drinking and driving; and

WHEREAS, always seeking impactful strategies for highway safety, Jim worked tirelessly to develop the evidence and arguments to pass legislation as well as uphold the constitutionality of Louisiana's sobriety laws and seatbelt laws; and

WHEREAS, given Jim Champagne's success in Louisiana, his expertise was sought at the national level; his service included stints on the national boards of Operation Lifesaver and Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD); and

WHEREAS, Jim's leadership and success resulted in numerous awards and recognitions including the J. Stannard Baker Award from the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the Highway Safety Partner Award from Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) as well as awards from the National Commission Against Drunk Driving and SADD, and

WHEREAS, in his more than forty year career, Jim Champagne brought unmatched commitment, passion, and zeal to highway safety; and

WHEREAS, Jim Champagne spent his second retirement playing golf, cheering on the Louisiana State University Tigers, and being PawPaw; and

WHEREAS, Jim Champagne is survived by his stepson, Philip Melancon and his partner Chris Guillotte; grandchildren Elizabeth and Alexander Melancon; daughter, Michelle Champagne; son, Michael Champagne; and brother, Bill Champagne; and

WHEREAS, Jim was preceded in death by Darlene, his beloved wife of thirty-eight years, his parents, and his sister Jane.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express sincere and heartfelt condolences upon the death of James "Jim" Edwin Champagne, and hereby extend deep appreciation for his many contributions to the state of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Phillip Melancon.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE