

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 179

BY SENATOR MORRELL

A RESOLUTION

To commend the Honorable Ernest Nathan "Dutch" Morial for being the first African American to be elected to the Louisiana State Legislature since Reconstruction.

WHEREAS, affectionately known as "Dutch", Ernest Nathan "Dutch" Morial, the youngest of six children was born on October 9, 1929, in New Orleans, Louisiana to the late Leonie V. and Walter Etienne Morial; Ernest Morial made his transition on December 24, 1989, at the age of sixty; and

WHEREAS, Ernest "Dutch" Morial was a skillful attorney, political icon, and Civil Rights activist known for many firsts throughout his life; Morial, was known for being a person of resourcefulness, an advocate, trailblazer, accomplished politician, and having a genuine heart and concern for people and his community; while these attributes were evident, there were other hallmarks of this great man such as his character and commitment to being a servant, leader, dedicated to equality and social justice issues; and

WHEREAS, a native of New Orleans, Louisiana, Dutch Morial attended and graduated from Xavier University, a historically black Catholic institution in 1951, with a bachelor of science degree in business administration; later he went on to become the first African American to receive a law degree from Louisiana State University Law School in 1954; and

WHEREAS, Dutch Morial began his professional career in the United States Army Intelligence Corp. during the Korean Conflict from 1954 to 1956; he married Sybil G. Haydel in 1955, and to this union were born five children, Julie, Marc, Jacques, Cheri, and Monique; after serving in the military, Dutch returned to his law practice in New Orleans in 1956 serving as general counsel to the Standard Life Insurance Company from 1956 to 1967, was appointed as an assistant U.S. Attorney for New Orleans from 1965 to 1967

before beginning a career in electoral politics; and

WHEREAS, as president of the New Orleans Chapter of the NAACP from 1962 to 1965, Dutch was at the forefront of black protests and the dismantling of Jim Crow laws; he became an attorney with the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, serving on the national level; he participated in the Dryades Street Boycott and fought for the desegregation of buses and streetcars and the integration of Louisiana State University of New Orleans (LSUNO) Dutch broke many barriers for other African Americans by filing successful suits to end desegregation practices in New Orleans and the state including New Orleans public schools, the recreation department, taxicabs, the airport, and the Municipal Auditorium; and

WHEREAS, in 1967, Dutch was elected to the Louisiana State Legislature as Representative for District 80 (Wards 1 and 2), becoming the first African American elected to that body since Reconstruction as well as many other notable accomplishments, becoming the first assistant African-American U.S. Attorney in New Orleans, the first African American to serve as juvenile court judge, and the first African American on the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals; and

WHEREAS, in 1977 he announced his candidacy for mayor of New Orleans, suing the State Judicial Commission for the right to campaign while remaining a judge; he ultimately won the general election over Joseph Dirosa by six thousand votes, becoming the first African-American Mayor of New Orleans and gained national attention during his first term as mayor for standing up to police and sanitation workers, which led to a city-wide strike resulting in the cancellation of Mardi Gras in 1979; and

WHEREAS, Mayor Morial was reelected as mayor of New Orleans after defeating Ron Faucheux in 1982, two years later, he was elected as president of the United States Council of Mayors; and

WHEREAS, Ernest N. "Dutch" Morial's legacy is vast and spans decades and the citizens of New Orleans will always be indebted to his commitment to making a difference in the lives of others and the great state of Louisiana; he has inspired many through his selfless efforts and stands as a model for all to follow giving us an example of what one can do by committing one's life to Christ, family and friends, and working hard to accomplish goals that are God's will for his life.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the members, both present and former, of the Louisiana Senate do hereby celebrate the legacy of Ernest N. "Dutch" Morial and salute his life of dismantling racial barriers, building alliances, and improving the quality of life for the people of the city of New Orleans and the state of Louisiana.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE