

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 24

BY SENATOR CARTER

A RESOLUTION

To express sincere condolences of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the death of Lizzie Mae Henry Charles, a community activist in the Algiers Cut-Off Neighborhood of Orleans Parish, Louisiana.

WHEREAS, Lizzie Mae Henry was born January 12, 1936, to Clarence and Ernestine Henry of New Orleans, Louisiana, and she was the eldest of six children born to the couple; and

WHEREAS, when Lizzie was twelve her family moved from the Seventh Ward area of New Orleans to make their home in Lower Coast Algiers, known as "the Cut-Off;" and

WHEREAS, Lizzie Henry was raised in the Second Baptist Church of the Algiers Cut-Off community where she was baptized and learned to love the Lord; and

WHEREAS, as an adult, Lizzie became a member of the Asbury United Methodist Church where she raised her children and participated in numerous church activities, including singing in the Women of Perfection Choir, Sunday school Bible classes, vacation Bible school, prayer and fasting ministry, and the Women of Asbury conferences; and

WHEREAS, on May 1, 1951, she married the love of her life, Hammond Charles Sr. and the couple had twelve children, raising them in a Christian home filled with love and support; and

WHEREAS, in 1967 tragedy struck as Hammond Charles met an untimely death and at only thirty-two, Lizzie Charles was left to raise her eight sons and four daughters, two of whom had physical challenges, on her own, drawing strength from her work ethic, her faith in God, and from the wise teachings of Norman Vincent Peale regarding "positive thinking;" and

WHEREAS, Lizzie created a loving and faithful home for her children and with her leadership and example, she and her children deepened their commitment to their community and found opportunities to give back to that community in many ways; and

WHEREAS, all of the couple's children took part in athletics, or pageantry, or political activism and religion, based on the strong foundation laid by Lizzie and Hammond before his death; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Charles began her work career as a domestic worker and house manager and subsequently sought employment with the Orleans Parish School Board, first in food service at Murray Henderson Elementary School, and later, as a transportation monitor; and

WHEREAS, Lizzie Charles worked as an election poll worker for many years, stationed at the Cut-Off Recreation Center where she became a fixture, greeting everyone with her beautiful smile; and

WHEREAS, Lizzie Mae Henry Charles was a well-known community activist who worked tirelessly to bring paved streets, lighting, and better schools to the area of Algiers Cut-Off, the second oldest neighborhood in the city; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Charles was instrumental in the integration of the Orleans Parish school system, including McDonogh 45 Elementary School, Edna Karr Junior High School (later a high school only), and O. Perry Walker High School; and

WHEREAS, Lizzie Charles was committed to improving the quality of education, particularly for those minority children living in the Algiers, Gretna, and McDonogh areas of the West Bank of New Orleans; and

WHEREAS, during the years of the struggle for school integration, Lizzie Charles was focused on the rights of minority students in the context of districtwide school integration; and

WHEREAS, Lizzie Charles worked with the Cut-Off playground booster club for years and was committed to providing a safe outdoor space for children living in crowded, and sometimes blighted, areas of the West Bank; and

WHEREAS, Lizzie Charles became the president of the Friends of Charity Benevolent Society Association where she worked to provide the best service possible for the association's members; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Charles worked tirelessly within her church and her community working to bring a better way of life to those who lived on the West Bank of New Orleans,

particularly Algiers Cut-Off and has been said to have been a voice for the voiceless during trying times for her community; and

WHEREAS, Lizzie was ever the life of the party and was not bothered to be the first on the dance floor when one of her favorite songs was being played; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Charles had many interests, but her greatest passion was for her family; her children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews were all the fortunate recipients of her love and the joy that she brought to the life she lived; and

WHEREAS, Lizzie Mae Henry Charles was a devoted follower of Christ, a passionate and energetic member of Asbury Methodist Church, the inspiring mother of twelve children whom she raised largely alone after her husband's death, a tireless community activist working for the children of the West Bank to assure their access to good integrated public schools, and a loving matriarch to a grateful family.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express sincere condolences upon the death of Lizzie Mae Henry Charles, a community activist in the Algiers Cut-Off Neighborhood of Orleans Parish, Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Cubie Charles, daughter of Mrs. Lizzie Charles on behalf of the family.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE