

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 31

BY SENATOR BERNARD

A RESOLUTION

To commend Angela Turner-Johnson, famed womens basketball player at Louisiana Tech University, upon the occasion of her induction into the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame.

WHEREAS, native Louisianian, Angela Turner-Johnson, as a member of the Louisiana Tech University's "Lady Techsters" of the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) championship basketball team in 1981, a Kodak All-American, and a member of the squad that won the first National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) women's championship in 1982, certainly has the credentials to merit inclusion in the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, Angela Turner grew up in Saline, Louisiana, in Bienville Parish and attended now closed Shady Grove High School, eventually graduating as a member of the class of 1978; and

WHEREAS, while at Shady Grove, Ms. Turner was named Miss Shady Grove and she was valedictorian of her class, student body president, and the star of the girls basketball team, averaging nearly thirty-one points and fifteen rebounds per game in her senior year; and

WHEREAS, Angela Turner led her small Class C high school team to the state championship in 1978 with a season record of forty-six wins and one loss, and she was named the outstanding player in Class C girls basketball in both her junior and senior years; and

WHEREAS, Angela was always interested in sports and played football in elementary school, but as there was almost no playing opportunities for girls in football, she turned her attention to basketball, playing in backyards and school playgrounds against boys who were bigger and taller than she; and

WHEREAS, because the boys were consistently blocking her lay up shots, Angela Turner perfected what would become her trademark mid-range jumper shot, a shot that at the time only boys were successfully making; and

WHEREAS, in the summer of 1978, before moving on to play at Louisiana Tech University, Ms. Turner played on the United States Junior National team, and averaged twelve points per game as the U.S. took home the silver medal, having faced teams from both North America and South America; and

WHEREAS, Angela was recruited by future Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame inductees and then coaches at Louisiana Tech, Sonja Hogg and Leon Barmore, to play basketball at the institution not far from her home; and

WHEREAS, Coach Hogg recalls Angela telling her during a recruiting visit, "Miss Hogg, we're going to win the national championship"; a bold statement that was evidence of Angela's "can do" attitude; and

WHEREAS, as Angela Turner, "A.T." to her teammates, arrived on campus in Ruston, Louisiana, the Lady Techsters were only four years into the womens basketball program and were playing under the auspices of the AIAW, rather than the NCAA; and

WHEREAS, Angela Turner's four years at Louisiana Tech brought two national titles, one with AIAW and one with the NCAA and two additional women's final four appearances, establishing a tradition of excellence in womens basketball that has continued into the twenty-first century, still claiming a spot among the most successful women's programs in the history of college athletics; and

WHEREAS, "A.T." was a significant contributor to that legacy as she was named most valuable player of the final four in 1981 under the AIAW, a member of the first NCAA Womens basketball national championship team in 1982, and garnered the honor of being named a Kodak All-American; and

WHEREAS, Angela Turner averaged sixteen and just over eighteen points, respectively, in her first two seasons at Tech, scoring primarily off her mid-range jump shot that usually came at the end of a series of picks in a play that at Louisiana Tech was called "Two Down"; and

WHEREAS, basketball teams today use that same scheme and former Techster assistant coach, now at Texas A&M University, Gary Blair, calls the play simply "Tech"; and

WHEREAS, in their final season in the AIAW, 1980-81, The Lady Techsters went

thirty-four and zero, facing the University of Southern California in the semi-final game in which "A.T." had fourteen points in the victory; and

WHEREAS, the Techsters went on to face rival University of Tennessee in the final where Angela Turner and teammates Pam Kelly and Janice Lawrence scored sixteen points each to lead the team, and "A.T.", having played seventy-nine of the eighty minutes in the two games, was named most valuable player of the Final Four; and

WHEREAS, the following season, 1981-82 the team played under the auspices of the NCAA and captured the first NCAA womens basketball national championship, one of three they would win in the coming decades; and

WHEREAS, the 1981-82 title game was Angela Turner's final appearance in a basketball uniform, walking off the court with another national championship on her resume'; and

WHEREAS, Angela Turner was inducted into the Louisiana Tech Athletics Hall of Fame in 1990 at which time her No. 5 jersey was retired; and

WHEREAS, the fabled Louisiana Tech womens basketball program has amassed a total of three national championships and appearances in thirteen final fours, twenty-three sweet sixteens, and twenty-seven national tournaments in the thirty-eight years since that first one in 1982; and

WHEREAS, Angela made impressions on her coaches and her teammates as Coach Hogg stated: "A.T. and Pam (Kelly) were the cornerstones of our program" and, "She (A.T.) was the kind of player that would walk through a wall for you"; high praise from a well-respected and beloved coach; and

WHEREAS, teammates, Kim Mulkey, current coach of the Louisiana State University Tigers and also a Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame inductee, recalls, "A.T. had a mid-range jump shot back in the day when it was mostly just men who were shooting them ... she was, and is, just a kind and classy person"; and

WHEREAS, in 1982, Angela Turner became one of the first ten women to receive an NCAA postgraduate scholarship which allowed her to become a certified public accountant, giving her a brighter future, both economically and as a professional in her field; and

WHEREAS, Angela Turner left her mark on womens basketball at Louisiana Tech, on her coaches and fellow players, and she has achieved a nearly forty-year career as a certified public accountant that led her as far from Bienville Parish as Los Angeles, California, and London, England, eventually leading her to a quieter life with her husband Troy Johnson as a wife, mother, and grandmother in Carrollton, Texas; and

WHEREAS, joining her coaches and teammates in the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame, an honor that many see as long overdue, is an honor and a recognition of which Angela Turner-Johnson is rightly entitled, for her exploits on the basketball court, her academic achievements in both high school and college, her role in making womens basketball players celebrities in Ruston, and the significant contributions she made to building a championship womens basketball program at Louisiana Tech University, and for living a life of which she can be very proud.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend Angela Turner-Johnson, famed womens basketball player at Louisiana Tech University, upon the occasion of her induction into the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Mrs. Angela Turner-Johnson.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE