

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 74

BY SENATORS B. GAUTREAUX, CHABERT, ADLEY, ALARIO, AMEDEE, APPEL, BROOME, CHAISSON, CHEEK, CLAITOR, CROWE, DONAHUE, DORSEY, DUPLESSIS, ERDEY, N. GAUTREAUX, GUILLORY, HEBERT, HEITMEIER, JACKSON, KOSTELKA, LAFLEUR, LONG, MARIONNEAUX, MARTINY, MCPHERSON, MICHOT, MORRELL, MORRISH, MOUNT, MURRAY, NEVERS, PETERSON, QUINN, RISER, SHAW, SMITH, THOMPSON AND WALSWORTH

A RESOLUTION

To commend Major General Hunt Downer for a lifetime of service to his community, state and country in the Louisiana Army National Guard.

WHEREAS, Major General Hunt Downer is a native Louisianian who was graduated in 1968 from Nicholls State College where he received his Bachelor of Science Degree before successfully earning a Juris Doctorate Degree from Loyola University School of Law in 1972; and

WHEREAS, General Downer began his military career as an enlisted soldier in 1968, as a member of the United States Army Reserves, where he served and used his natural leadership skills before receiving a direct appointment to Second Lieutenant in the United States Army Corps of Engineers in 1971; and

WHEREAS, General Downer would later join the Louisiana Army National Guard where he would receive his commission as a First Lieutenant in the Judge Advocate General Corps; and

WHEREAS, General Downer would also begin a successful career as an attorney before expanding his horizons into politics, where he would ultimately serve seven full terms in the Louisiana House of Representatives representing the people of District 52 in Terrebonne Parish and ultimately be elected as both Speaker Pro Tempore' and Speaker of the House; and

WHEREAS, General Downer, with his signature style of hard work and determination, would have great success as an officer and be known and respected for his leadership in the Louisiana Army National Guard; and

WHEREAS, he would receive high and much deserved recognition for his many accomplishments with awards such as the Louisiana Employer Support of the Guard and Reserves Distinguished Service Medal, the U.S. Coast Guard Meritorious Public Service Award, and the Department of the Navy Superior Public Service Award; and

WHEREAS, General Downer was activated with his unit, the 256th Infantry Brigade, during Operation Desert Shield/Storm and assigned to the Staff Judge Advocate's Office, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized), Fort Polk, Louisiana, and during the Southwest Asia Cease Fire Campaign, participated with the 377th Theater Area Command in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait; and

WHEREAS, General Downer left the Louisiana House of Representatives in 2000, in order to run for governor of Louisiana, and was widely endorsed and heavily supported for the office before a disappointing showing in the primary election to then-Congressman Bobby Jindal; and

WHEREAS, General Downer would soon be working for the eventual winner of the governor's race, Kathleen Blanco, as he served as her secretary of the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs and as her director of Legislative Affairs in the Office of the Governor; and

WHEREAS, General Downer would face one of the biggest challenges of his life when Hurricane Katrina slammed ashore in southeast Louisiana on Monday, August 29, 2005, flooding New Orleans, causing one thousand, eight hundred and thirty-six lives to be lost and causing eighty-one billion dollars in total damage; and

WHEREAS, as the violent winds of the killer storm passed and moved, incredibly, north to Canada, General Downer and the soldiers of his command at Jackson Barracks in New Orleans would spend the next weeks rescuing people stranded by the flood waters; supplying food, water, and other necessities to persons displaced by the storm; and getting a handle on the biggest natural disaster in the history of the United States; and

WHEREAS, as soon as General Downer and his troops began to get the post-Katrina emergency situation in New Orleans stabilized, Hurricane Rita struck the western portion of Louisiana, and General Downer's new mission was to lead rescue, recovery and other assistance efforts in Louisiana's devastated western parishes; and

WHEREAS, General Downer greatly distinguished himself with his outstanding leadership during the largest disaster to ever befall the state of Louisiana and the United States; and

WHEREAS, General Downer would later be given the mission of rebuilding and restoring the beautifully historic but badly-damaged Jackson Barracks facility in New Orleans; and

WHEREAS, General Downer would lean hard into the task of bringing about the rebirth of the historic post, named for President Andrew Jackson after his defeat of British troops at the Battle of New Orleans; and

WHEREAS, General Downer accomplished the challenging mission of rebuilding the old, but priceless, facility and was proud of the results of the hard work and leadership he expended on this final and highly important mission of his military career as he neared his planned retirement; and

WHEREAS, General Downer's major awards and decorations earned during a brilliant military career include the Meritorious Service Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, the Joint Service Commendation, the Army Commendation Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters, the Army Achievement Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, the Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters, the National Defense Service Medal with Bronze Star, the Southwest Asia Service Medal with Bronze Star for the Cease Fire Campaign, the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal with M Device and Bronze Hour Glass, the Army Service Army Reserve Component Overseas Training Ribbon, the Kuwait Liberation Medal, and the hard-earned Air Assault Badge.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby extend its highest commendations to Major General Hunt Downer for his sacrifice, service, and devotion to duty during a long and highly successful military career.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to General Downer.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE