

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 76

BY SENATOR PERRY

A RESOLUTION

To commend John Dan Gielen for his numerous contributions to the community of Crowley and the state of Louisiana, and for operating successful retail businesses for fifty years.

WHEREAS, John Dan Gielen was born in Crowley, Louisiana, and attended St. Michael's High School; and

WHEREAS, he received his Bachelor of Science degree at Mississippi College in Clinton, Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gielen has been married to his wife, Peggy Angelle Gielen, for more than fifty years and they have four children, twenty grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, he and his family have been lifelong members of St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church in Crowley; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gielen is a member of the Knights of Columbus, a former member of the Acadia Parish School Board, and served on the board of directors of the National Association of Tobacco Outlets; and

WHEREAS, in the mid-1960s, he pursued his dream of going into the convenience store business and built the first Shop Rite on a corner location a few blocks from his childhood home which still operates today; and

WHEREAS, Shop Rite was incorporated in May, 1966, and grew to twenty retail convenience stores and supermarkets in South Louisiana in ten years that spanned sixty miles west to Lake Charles and one hundred twenty-five miles east to Houma; and

WHEREAS, by the early 1990s, Shop Rite survived the oil bust of the 1980s and continued to expand to what is now thirty-five locations; and

WHEREAS, in 1991, Mr. Gielen opened the first Tobacco Plus store and has expanded the discounted retail concept to twenty-six stores throughout Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, while growing the retail businesses, he expanded into the wholesale business by purchasing Church Point Wholesale, a regional grocery and tobacco wholesaler in 1991, and subsequently through the acquisition of Pelican Wholesale in Lake Charles in the mid-1990s; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gielen's businesses, Shop Rite, Tobacco Plus, and Church Point Wholesale, employ more than one thousand associates, staff, and clerical employees in fifteen parishes throughout Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, he has been an avid supporter of the youth in Acadia Parish and been recognized as Business Man of the Year by the Crowley Chamber of Commerce, and has raised more than a million dollars for patients at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, Freedom Plaza was funded and built under the direction of Mr. Gielen to pay tribute to members of the five branches of the armed services and includes a monument featuring the names of deceased veterans from St. Landry, Lafayette, Vermilion and Acadia parishes; and

WHEREAS, the success of the state of Louisiana, the strength of our communities, and the overall vitality of American society depends, in great measure, upon the dedication of people like John Dan Gielen who use their considerable talent and resources to increase economic growth for future generations.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend John Dan Gielen for his numerous contributions to the community of Crowley and the state of Louisiana, and for operating successful retail businesses for fifty years, and does hereby record for posterity the pride and honor that he brings to his family, friends, community, the state of Louisiana, and the United States.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to John Dan Gielen.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE