

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 99

BY SENATOR LAFLEUR

A RESOLUTION

To express the sincere and heartfelt condolences of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the death of Reverend Sheldon Louis Roy.

WHEREAS, it is with great regret, sadness, and sorrow that the members of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana have learned of the death of the Reverend Sheldon Louis Roy on Saturday, January 27, 2018, at the age of sixty-four; and

WHEREAS, Sheldon Louis Roy was born in Cottonport, Louisiana, to the late Van Lewis Roy and Lillia "Bettie" Elizabeth Landaiche, but he grew up in Marksville; and

WHEREAS, he was a 1971 graduate of Marksville High School, he attended Louisiana State University and the Northwood Institute, receiving a bachelor of art's degree from Saint Meinrad College and later a Master of Divinity from the University of Dallas; and

WHEREAS, as a child, his mentor was longtime St. Joseph Catholic Church Priest, Henry "Father Van" Van DerPutten, who called young Sheldon a nickname in Dutch which meant "the little mighty blast" because the church would echo from the full organ music played by the young Sheldon; and

WHEREAS, as a teenager, he was on the volunteer campaign staff in the successful efforts to elect Eddie Knoll as district attorney; and

WHEREAS, before his priesthood, he took over the family business of Lewis Roy Motors and ran it for several years, and in keeping with his love of French culture and the Catholic faith, he advertised the dealership in both English and French and always closed the dealership on Catholic Holy Days of Obligation; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Sheldon Louis Roy was ordained a priest on May 31, 1986, and served in active ministry for twelve years; and

WHEREAS, he was an exemplary and highly admired citizen of Louisiana who worked tirelessly on a multitude of business, civic, political, and religious causes throughout

his life; and

WHEREAS, he served as president of the Marksville Chamber of Commerce in 1976, and was the founding president of the Avoyelles Parish chapter of CODOFIL (Council of Development of French in Louisiana); and

WHEREAS, he successfully spearheaded the effort to officially rename all the waterways in Avoyelles Parish from English back to their original French names, and still to this day, maps of Avoyelles Parish contain the French names; and

WHEREAS, he had a deep love and understanding of the culture of Avoyelles Parish, he spearheaded and volunteered on several projects to enhance the parish, and was often called upon to speak about the rich history of the parish and its people, and he promoted the fact that Avoyelles Parish was settled by direct French immigrants and Quebec descendants – not by the Acadians who came from Nova Scotia; and

WHEREAS, as a preservationist, he renovated one of Marksville's grand old homes, that of his great aunt Pearl Roy Bordelon, and he often opened the home for civic meetings; and

WHEREAS, he also preserved and shared a large collection of nineteenth century and early twentieth century photographs of Avoyelles Parish and its people, and most recently discovered and preserved several Avoyelles post-Colonial documents from the 1700s which he had digitized at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette; and

WHEREAS, he completed the transcription and translation of the post-Civil War diary of the Rev. Julius Juneau of France, and this diary details the creation of the Mansura and Marksville Catholic Church parishes; and

WHEREAS, his most recent research uncovered the history of a previously unknown church at the Avoyelles Post, established in the 1790s and was in existence until about 1845 when the first church building was erected between Marksville and Mansura; and

WHEREAS, he had returned to Marksville, Louisiana, in recent years where he immediately focused his efforts on strengthening CODOFIL; and

WHEREAS, he started a French-speaking group which still continues to meet at the library on Saturday mornings, many both old and young, take part in the group to enhance their French; and

WHEREAS, he also taught high school French at the Avoyelles Charter School, where he tried to incorporate Avoyelles French sayings in his class, teaching the difference in modern Parisian French and older Avoyelles French; and

WHEREAS, he led the effort to develop a "twinning" agreement between Avoyelles Parish and Bellechasse, Quebec, believed to be the first county-level twinning agreement in the country; and

WHEREAS, last summer he was fortunate enough to connect with relatives in Saint-Vallier de Bellechasse, Québec, where he saw the homesite and farm of the Roy family patriarch, Jean B. Roy, who immigrated to Avoyelles Parish in the 1790s; and

WHEREAS, he had planned a family reunion in Quebec this summer where the Roys from Avoyelles Parish were to meet their relatives in Quebec; and

WHEREAS, his last years were spent working in executive management and fundraising efforts for various charities and organizations, and most recently was working in business with his cousin, Josette Rovira Hargett, helping the mentally challenged in the central area of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, because of his numerous accomplishments in public and private life, Father Roy will be forever remembered by the people of Louisiana for his integrity, dignity, courage, discoveries, knowledge, and the joy that he left in the hearts of all who knew him.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana respectfully acknowledges with gratitude the outstanding service and numerous accomplishments of the Reverend Sheldon Louis Roy and extends sincere sorrow and heartfelt condolences on the occasion of his death.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the family of Reverend Sheldon Louis Roy.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE