

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 177

BY SENATORS MURRAY, ADLEY, ALARIO, AMEDEE, BROOME, CASSIDY, CHAISSON, CHEEK, CRAVINS, CROWE, DONAHUE, DORSEY, DUPLESSIS, DUPRE, ERDEY, B. GAUTREAUX, N. GAUTREAUX, GRAY, HEBERT, HEITMEIER, JACKSON, KOSTELKA, LAFLEUR, LONG, MARIONNEAUX, MARTINY, MCPHERSON, MICHOT, MORRISH, MOUNT, NEVERS, QUINN, RISER, SHAW, SHEPHERD, SMITH, THOMPSON AND WALSWORTH

A RESOLUTION

To express the sincere and heartfelt condolences of the Senate of the Legislature of

Louisiana upon the passing of retired Louisiana Supreme Court Justice Revius J.

Ortique, Jr.

WHEREAS, Louisiana Supreme Court Justice Revius J. Ortique, Jr., was universally known as a passionate fighter for the civil and human rights of those persons struggling to receive justice in the American legal system; and

WHEREAS, Justice Ortique, Jr., was known for his legendary service to his country, state and community and for his total commitment to ensuring that all persons received equal treatment under the law; and

WHEREAS, Justice Ortique, Jr., was a native of New Orleans, Louisiana, born in 1924 and a member of America's greatest generation, serving as an officer in the United States Army with honor, bravery and distinction in the Pacific theater during World War II; and

WHEREAS, Justice Ortique returned to New Orleans and continued his education after his war-time service, earning a bachelor's degree at Dillard University, a master's degree in criminology from Indiana University that concentrated on the criminal justice system in the South, and, ultimately, a law degree from Southern University in 1956; and

WHEREAS, Justice Ortique, Jr., began a long, highly successful and distinguished career in law, specializing in estate law but giving his heart, soul, and much of his time and energy to the civil rights movement that was beginning to make major strides and bring massive changes to an American society where African-Americans were frequently regarded as second-class citizens; and

WHEREAS, Justice Ortique, Jr., exhibiting great leadership, intellect and discipline would be elected president of the Urban League of Greater New Orleans for five terms, president of the National Bar Association and president for three terms of the Community Relations Council, a biracial group working to promote harmony between Americans of all racial origins; and

WHEREAS, Justice Ortique, Jr., was hugely influential in convincing United States President Lyndon Johnson to appoint African-Americans to the federal bench and legendary civil rights lawyer, Thurgood Marshall to be the first black justice on the United States Supreme Court; and

WHEREAS, Justice Ortique, Jr., would soon be tapped by President Johnson for membership to the Federal Hospital Council, and subsequently asked by President Nixon to serve on the President's Commission on Campus Unrest and the newly created federal Legal Services Corporation to provide civil legal assistance to those who were unable to afford it; and

WHEREAS, Justice Ortique, Jr., would later be appointed to a seat on the Orleans Parish Civil District bench by the Louisiana Supreme Court before winning the seat outright and being elected Chief Judge by his fellow jurists; and

WHEREAS, Justice Ortique, Jr., worked tirelessly with the Louisiana State Bar Association's Legal Aid Committee to create a nationally revered model for pro bono legal work before being elected the first African-American to the Louisiana Supreme Court; and

WHEREAS, Justice Ortique, Jr., would soon begin to receive major, national awards in recognition of his outstanding legal accomplishments from the Louisiana State Bar Association, the National Bar Association and the American Bar Association, as well as six honorary doctorates from renowned universities and being honored by President Clinton with his nomination to the United Nations General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, Justice Ortique, Jr., would serve two terms as president of the National Bar Association, joining with leaders of the American Bar Association in developing the Legal Services Program of the Office of Economic Opportunity and remaining on the National Bar Association's Advisory Council; and

WHEREAS, Justice Ortique, Jr., would also be honored by his peers with his election

as president of two of the most prominent African-American professional associations, the Southwest Bar Association and the Louis A. Martinet Society; and

WHEREAS, Justice Ortique, Jr., was universally respected for his unyielding integrity and deep sense of fair play for all persons, serving as a magnificent role model to all who were fortunate enough to witness him in action, whether from the bench or fighting for the rights of the common man in landmark civil rights cases that brought immeasurable positive change in American society; and

WHEREAS, Justice Ortique, Jr., will be greatly missed by many, especially his beloved wife, Miriam Marie Victorianne Ortique, his adoring daughter, Rhesa Marie McDonald and her husband, Alden J. McDonald and his three precious grandchildren, Heidi, Todd and Alden J. McDonald, Jr.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby extend its most profound and sincere condolences to the family of Justice Revius J. Ortique, Jr., for his incredible service to his country, state and community and further expresses its endless gratitude to a man who always placed the interests of others before himself in order to bring about major, positive, and societal changes.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the family of Louisiana Supreme Court Justice Revius J. Ortique, Jr.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE