

2015 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 18

BY REPRESENTATIVE THIERRY

A RESOLUTION

To commend Alton Broussard of Opelousas for his contributions to the community of Opelousas as a civil and social rights advocate and business owner.

WHEREAS, for more than fifty years, Alton Broussard cut hair in his downtown Opelousas barber shop while blazing a trail through the injustice of racism and segregation; and,

WHEREAS, following a two-year tour of duty in the United States Navy, Mr. Broussard enrolled in and graduated from LaBelle Barber College in New Orleans; his barbering business provided the platform from which he would launch his efforts for social justice; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Broussard joined the St. Landry Parish NAACP and encouraged voter registration and organized nonviolent protests and sit-ins to end racial segregation; he credits ownership of his own business with his ability to participate fully in the civil rights movement without the fear of job loss; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Broussard played a key role in a successful sit-in demonstration in Oberlin that involved the town's Catholic church, which at the time required blacks to sit at the back of the church; he also marched in Selma, Alabama, following the infamous Bloody Sunday of March 7, 1965; and

WHEREAS, in the mid 1960s, Mr. Broussard accepted an appointment from Mayor Wilfred Cortez to serve on the Opelousas Housing Authority's board of commissioners, the first black to receive such an appointment; and

WHEREAS, in the early 1970s, Mr. Broussard worked with others to fight unfair voting practices and was among the first blacks elected to the parish police jury, a position in which he served for twelve years; and

WHEREAS, Alton Broussard served on the Tri-Parish board of directors; the St. Landry Community Action Council, which was the governing board of the Head Start program; the state Board of Barber Examiners; the Krotz Springs Port Commission; and he was a junior knight commander in the Knights of Peter Claver Council 8; and

WHEREAS, Alton Broussard retired from barbering in 2013 but he remains active with his farm, rental properties, and retains his seat on the Opelousas General Health System board of directors, where he continues to carry out his work of advocacy for the citizens of his community.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend Alton Broussard for a lifetime of contributions to civil rights, social justice, and human compassion.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Alton Broussard.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES