

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 126

BY SENATORS LONG AND GALLOT AND REPRESENTATIVES BROWN, COX  
AND HOWARD

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To express the sincere condolences of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the death of Joe Sampite', former mayor of Natchitoches, to commend a life well spent in service to his community, and to note the proud legacy he leaves to the city of Natchitoches and the state of Louisiana.

WHEREAS, it is with great sadness that the Legislature of Louisiana has learned of the death of Joe Sampite', on Friday, May 18, 2012, at the age of eighty-one; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Michael Sampite' was born in New Orleans in 1931, reared in Cloutierville in Natchitoches Parish, received a business education degree from Northwestern State University in 1959, and served in the National Guard and United States Air Force in the Korean Conflict, before beginning a career in teaching and coaching; and

WHEREAS, he was a successful basketball and baseball coach at St. Mary's High School in Natchitoches and Jesuit High School in Shreveport and was recognized as a statewide leader in the promotion of education and recreation; and

WHEREAS, after retiring from his education career, Joe Sampite' ran for and was elected as mayor of Natchitoches and became one of the most effective and dynamic mayors in Louisiana history who was instrumental in bringing the filming of the movie "Steel Magnolias" to Natchitoches and was at the forefront of downtown revitalization and the development of a vibrant tourism industry in that city; and

WHEREAS, Natchitoches was recognized in national publications during Joe Sampite's tenure as mayor as a leading site for tourism in Louisiana and the South and as one of the nation's most attractive communities for retirees; and

WHEREAS, as mayor, he expanded the city's recreation program and police and fire departments and spearheaded major improvements in infrastructure and the community's

airport and he also guided the annexation and development of a corridor from the city to Interstate 49 that increased the size of the city by forty percent; and

WHEREAS, Joe Sampite' served as president of the Louisiana Municipal Association and was the first recipient of the statewide organization's President's Award and while serving as mayor, Sampite' was selected by The Shreveport Times as one of the Top 100 Influential People in Northwest Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, he served five terms as mayor of Natchitoches from 1980 until his retirement in 2000 and was known for wearing white socks, a carryover from his coaching career, and for the "I Love Natchitoches" stickers that he distributed by the thousands over the years; and

WHEREAS, Joe Sampite' was a tireless advocate for Natchitoches and Northwestern State University; and

WHEREAS, he was inducted into the Louisiana Political Hall of Fame in Winnfield in 2002, after being inducted in 2000 into the Northwestern State University Hall of Distinction, or Long Purple Line, the university's highest honor for alumni; and

WHEREAS, during his political career, Joe Sampite' was profiled in the prestigious magazine, "The Oxford American", in an article entitled "No Ordinary Joe"; and

WHEREAS, he received numerous other honors, including Man of the Year Awards from the Natchitoches Parish Chamber of Commerce and Natchitoches Jaycees and, in 1984, the "Louisiana Parks and Recreation Distinguished Service Award" and was a life member of the Chamber of Commerce, Knights of Columbus, American Legion, and Founders of Natchitoches; and

WHEREAS, he was a longtime volunteer for the disability community including helping to establish the Natchitoches Association of Retarded Citizens and being named "Professional of the Year" by the Louisiana Association for Disabled Children; and

WHEREAS, Joe Sampite' was an active member of Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church as well as many local groups during his retirement such as the Agitators, The Gerousia and the Coach Ledet Coffee Club; and

WHEREAS, he was preceded in death by his parents, Dr. Alphonse J. Sampite', and Bathilda Guillot Sampite'; his wife, Hazel Barnes Sampite'; daughter, Sharon Elizabeth

Sampite'; along with many of his siblings: Albert Sampite', Eleanor Sampite' Dimmick, Leona Sampite' Hernandez, Grundy Sampite', Kelly Sampite' Poche, Cecilia Sampite' Morford, Michael Sampite' and Mary Sampite' Lacour; and

WHEREAS, Joe Sampite' is survived by his son, Chris Sampite' and wife, Daphne Gray Sampite', and their sons Michael and Ryan Sampite'; daughter, Sheila Sampite' Hardin and husband, Lt. Col. Alan Hardin, and their sons Daniel and Andrew Hardin; daughter, Michaela Marie Sampite'; and his grandchildren, John and Allison Van Hoof along with siblings: sisters, Sally Logan and Marielise Sampite' Brosset, brother, A.J. Sampite' Jr.; and close friend and companion Sue Vercher; and

WHEREAS, with the passing of Joe Sampite', Natchitoches lost an icon and the state has lost one of her finest sons; a man who touched so many lives through his years of coaching and as mayor; a leader, a gentleman, and a visionary; and a man whose legacy will live on forever in Natchitoches and whose memory will remain eternal in the hearts and minds of his family, friends, and all of those who knew and loved him; and

WHEREAS, the success of the state of Louisiana, the strength of our communities, and the overall vitality of American society depend in great measure on people like Joe Sampite', who unselfishly dedicated his life for the betterment of others.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express sincere condolences to the family of Joe Sampite', former mayor of Natchitoches, on the occasion of his death, commend a life well spent in service to his community, and note the proud legacy Joe Sampite' leaves to the city of Natchitoches and the state of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the family of Joe Sampite'.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES