

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 126

BY SENATOR HEITMEIER

A RESOLUTION

To commend Oswald Hinson Welch, for his contributions during his more than ninety years of service and involvement in improving Louisiana and his service to his country in World War II.

WHEREAS, Oswald Welch was born in Fullerton, Vernon Parish, Louisiana, on January 14, 1921; and

WHEREAS, he has lived all of his life in Louisiana, spending segments of his life in Oakdale, Metairie, and Gretna, where he currently resides; and

WHEREAS, at the age of twenty, Welch entered into service in the United States Navy in 1941, in San Diego, California; and

WHEREAS, while in San Diego, he was trained in sonar technology, he subsequently was sent to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and was assigned to the *USS Skylark*, a minesweeper as its sonar man; and

WHEREAS, the *USS Skylark* was commissioned in November 1942 and during the course of the war in the Pacific and, as result of her gallant crew, received three Battle Stars for meritorious participation in battle; and

WHEREAS, throughout most of the remainder of the war in the Pacific, Welch remained with the *Skylark*, performing his responsibilities as sonar man by detecting both mines and enemy ships in the waters near his ship; and

WHEREAS, working tirelessly to maintain a watch for dangerous mines and enemy ships which resulted in his ship remaining safe from these threats, Welch rose in the ranks to become a first petty officer and was reassigned from the *Skylark* in March 1945; and

WHEREAS, a mere three weeks after having left his duties on the *Skylark*, this proud ship was sunk by the enemy off of Okinawa Island on April 8, 1945; and

WHEREAS, after completing his tour of duty in the South Pacific and following the end of the war in the Pacific in August 1945, Welch returned to Louisiana and resumed his studies in Ruston at Louisiana Polytechnic Institute, known today as Louisiana Tech; and

WHEREAS, on March 6, 1948, Welch married Fannie Mae Patton and the couple settled down to live in Monroe, Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, the four children born to Fannie and "Ozzie" are David Hinson Welch, Richard Tanner Welch, Lisa Welch Myers, and Henry Robert Welch who went on to produce eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren for the Welches; and

WHEREAS, eventually Welch went to work for the State of Louisiana as a Juvenile Probation and Parole officer in New Orleans and the family moved to Gretna; and

WHEREAS, he enjoyed his work with children needing guidance and attention after having found themselves in the juvenile criminal justice system and he served in this role for over thirty-two years; and

WHEREAS, the Welches enjoyed sixty-four years of love and companionship in their marriage, until the death of his beloved Fannie, in January 2013; and

WHEREAS, as both Ozzie and Fannie were members of what is often called "the Greatest Generation", their lives filled with commitment to God, country, family, and community stand as an example to all of those who follow them in this state and in this country; and

WHEREAS, the contributions of these children of the Great Depression as a whole, have set a high bar for the generations to follow, to remain true to the important spiritual and civic tenets which have governed this nation from its first days as colonies of various European nations into these tumultuous times of the Twenty-First Century.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend Oswald Hinson Welch on his long life in Louisiana and on his many contributions as a man of God, a patriot to his country, a dedicated father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, and an outstanding citizen of his community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Oswald Hinson Welch.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE