

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 76

BY SENATOR MURRAY

A RESOLUTION

To commend airman Calvin Moret, the last surviving New Orleans member of the Tuskegee Airmen.

WHEREAS, the Tuskegee Airmen is the popular name of a group of African American pilots who fought in World War II, formally they were the 332nd Fighter Group of the United States Army Air Corps; and

WHEREAS, still subject to Jim Crow laws, the American military was racially segregated and the Tuskegee Airmen were subject to racial discrimination, both in and outside the Army, but despite great adversities, the airmen trained and flew with distinction; and

WHEREAS, as a teenager, Calvin Moret had a choice to either wait to be drafted and sent overseas or, having studied aviation since he was a child, he could sign up to train at the Tuskegee Institute; and

WHEREAS, he trained at the Tuskegee Institute in 1943 to 1944 and was commissioned as a flight officer in 1944; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Moret understood the historical importance of the group of men he was a part of, a group that had been considered a military experiment; and

WHEREAS, as keynote speaker of the forty-first annual diversity dinner at Minnesota State University, Mr. Moret explained why the group of airmen were considered less than capable, as it was believed that a black man's brain was not large enough to make combat computations or quick decisions; and

WHEREAS, to demonstrate the ignorance of that idea, he asked the attendees in the student union ballroom to look into the eyes of one of their neighbors and determine what they could tell about the person, listing age, skin color, and height being obvious but nothing from a glance could one determine a person's character; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Moret, the last surviving Airman from New Orleans, has received increased attention with the release of the feature film Red Tails, which is an account of the Tuskegee Airmen; and

WHEREAS, the Tuskegee Airmen, at the forefront of the Civil Rights Movement, were credited with over fifteen thousand combat sorties, a record of protecting United States bombers along with being decorated with three Distinguished Unit Citations, one Silver Star, an estimated one hundred and fifty Distinguished Flying Crosses, fourteen Bronze stars, more than seven hundred Air Medals and eight Purple Hearts; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Moret also served in the Army Air Corps 99th Fighter Squadron and was trained to fly P-40s and later P47s, but never flew overseas; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, he, along with the other surviving members of the Tuskegee Airmen, was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal; and

WHEREAS, recently given the keys to the city of New Orleans, he was honored by New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu, who said Mr. Moret blessed this country with his courage and tenacity; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Moret continues to take his role seriously, making speaking appearances across the country, telling stories that would otherwise go untold; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Moret has received honorary doctorate degrees and is also a World War II Museum honoree.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend Calvin Moret, the last surviving New Orleans member of the Tuskegee Airmen.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Mr. Calvin Moret.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE