SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 107

BY SENATORS CHAISSON, ADLEY, ALARIO, AMEDEE, APPEL, BROOME, CHEEK, CLAITOR, CROWE, DONAHUE, DORSEY, DUPLESSIS, DUPRE, ERDEY, B. GAUTREAX, N. GAUTREAX, GRAY EVANS, GUILLORY, HEBERT, HEITMEIER, JACKSON, KOSTELKA, LAFLEUR, LONG, MARIONNEAUX, MARTINY, MCPHERSON, MICHOT, MORRELL, MRRISH, MOUNT, MURRAY, NEVERS, QUINN, RISER, SHAW, SMITH, THOMPSON AND WALSWORTH

CONDOLENCES. Expresses condolences upon the death of Michael S. Baer III, former secretary of the Senate.

A RESOLUTION

To express the sincere and heartfelt condolences of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the passing of Michael S. Baer III, former secretary of the Senate, and to remember him as an invaluable asset to the legislative process.

WHEREAS, it is with great remorse that the Louisiana Senate bids farewell to one of its own, a larger-than-life character such as Michael S. Baer III, a man enmeshed in the political fiber of this state for nearly forty years; and

WHEREAS, politics was his life, breath, and leisure; as a scholar on governmental affairs, politicians sought his counsel on issues of constitutional and statutory law and the intricacies of legislative procedure; and

WHEREAS, Michael Shellman Baer III was reared in Washington Parish, a native of Bogalusa, born to Michael S. Baer, Jr., and Gwen Willis Baer, proprietors of a local hardwood sawmill; and was nurtured in the idyllic setting of a small town; and

WHEREAS, his college career brought him to Baton Rouge where he garnered a bachelor's degree in business finance from Louisiana State University with a minor in forestry; and

WHEREAS, the late Senator B.B. "Sixty" Rayburn, a long-time friend and mentor, recommended Mike for his first job at the then Louisiana Legislative Council, the forerunner
of Senate Legislative Services, as a student worker and printer in 1972; and

WHEREAS, those were sparse days as a student attending LSU law school and
supporting a growing family, but he worked hard and advanced quickly to more prominent
positions as law clerk, committee staff assistant, research analyst, and staff attorney after
admission to the bar in 1974; and

WHEREAS, during this time with the Legislative Council, he staffed numerous
Senate committees including the committees on finance, retirement, and revenue and fiscal
affairs, plus the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget, the Joint Domed Stadium
Committee, and the Constitutional Convention of 1973; and

WHEREAS, ready to embrace fresh opportunities, in 1976, Mike accepted the
position of assistant to Executive Counsel Camille F. Gravel, Jr., in the office of Governor
Edwin W. Edwards; and

WHEREAS, when Senate Secretary Charles William "Bill" Roberts accepted a
judgeship for the Nineteenth Judicial District in February 1979, Mike Baer returned to the
Senate as its secretary and thus began an era of innovation in new technologies unheard of in
other state legislatures; and

WHEREAS, this extraordinary man of vision took a proactive stance on new
applications which had a positive effect on the efficiency of the legislative process with
utilization of cutting-edge software developments in word processing, reporting, record
keeping, electronic chamber applications, such as the reader board, senate desk operations,
push-button technology for a recognition and response queue of all legislator questions and
voting, and telecommunication advancements, including voice mail, facsimile, and internet
access; all of which were made readily available in chamber at senators' desks, in district
offices, and in offices within the capitol; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure, the drafting process was streamlined with personal
computer modifications which took research and drafting techniques from pencil and paper
operations to desktop publishing, compressing the time period involved in production of
legislative requests from days to mere hours; and

WHEREAS, implementation of these new technologies set the Louisiana Senate as
the high benchmark by which others were measured, far ahead of many states and nations,
who sent their emissaries to observe the mechanics of a legislative day in the chamber; and

WHEREAS, he was a dynamo of intellectual prowess with a mastery of legislative procedures that made his expertise essential to those he served, gaining their trust and respect, always accessible and always cordial; and

WHEREAS, Mike Baer, as caretaker of the Senate, orchestrated daily operations with seamless proficiency while serving under six Senate presidents, Michael O'Keefe, Sammy Nunez, Allen Bares, Randy Ewing, John Hainkel, and Don Hines; and

WHEREAS, with attention to every detail, Baer was instrumental in the design and completion of a new wing of offices for Senate members and staff built underground, with the Senate Briefing Room as the jewel in the crown of multimedia adaptation; and

WHEREAS, Baer was associated with prestigious peer organizations such as the American Society of Clerks and Secretaries, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the National Association of Legislative Information Technology, and the Southern Legislative Conference; and

WHEREAS, with a compelling interest in Louisiana's political history, he supported and served on the boards of the Old State Capitol Foundation and Louisiana State University Academy of Politics, and contributed to the historic preservation and restoration of the Pentagon Barracks; and

WHEREAS, in the practice of law, he was a founding member of the Koepp, Hamilton, Henderson, and Baer law firm; was also an associate with Gravel, Roy, and Burns; and shared his legal on-the-job training experiences with eager young students as an adjunct professor at Southern University Law Center; and

WHEREAS, his political acumen made him a favored guest commentator with local television and radio stations projecting the outcome of statewide elections; and

WHEREAS, he was a fanatic about his alma mater, LSU, particularly its football and baseball programs; served on the boards of the LSU Laboratory School Foundation and Athletic Council; and received special recognition from the LSU College of Education; and

WHEREAS, he was also a man of kindness and tender spirit who found great joy in the shared experiences of life, with children's sporting events, annual trips to Disney World, Christmas giving, fishing, white water rafting, and outdoor cooking occasions; always with
WHEREAS, known as quite the animal lover, he had a penchant for exotic birds and water fowl, and a menagerie of unusual four-legged animals, dogs, and cats around the house; and

WHEREAS, he was the originator of so many far-sighted notions which came to fruition and propelled the Senate forward into a new century; a man motivated beyond the query of "what if?" to a complex plan of action; and

WHEREAS, in 2004, he stepped down from public life to devote more time to family life and to focus on other interests, still allowing time for consultations with budding neophytes on the most effective campaign methods; and

WHEREAS, he is preceded in death by his parents and his son, Christian Price Baer, and survived by sons, Michael Baer IV and Andrew Chase Baer; daughters, Deborah B. Johnson and Gwen B. Thompson; sisters, Katherine B. Perrault and Gwen B. Greene; and a host of extended family and devoted friends; and

WHEREAS, Mike Baer is remembered by the leaders and legislators whom he served with glowing admiration as one of the best and brightest attorneys of his time, a fountain of knowledge in all areas of constitutional and statutory law, and an invaluable participant in the legislative process, forging a strong working relationship with members of the Senate through fair and impartial judgment, with allegiance to all and favoritism to none; and

WHEREAS, the poet, Walt Whitman, wrote "... I announce the great individual, fluid as Nature, chaste, affectionate, compassionate, fully armed; I announce a life that shall be copious, vehement, spiritual, bold, and I announce an end that shall lightly and joyfully meet its translation."

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express its sincere condolences to the family of Michael S. Baer III and does hereby recollect his many years of faithful public service to this body.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate of Louisiana, on behalf of the citizens of the state of Louisiana, hereby honors the life of Michael S. Baer III and pays tribute to his remarkable legacy.
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the
family of Michael S. Baer III.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Susan P. Montague.

DIGEST

Chaisson            SR No.

Expresses condolences upon the passing of Michael S. Baer III former secretary of the Senate.