

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 736

In Memory
of
Billy Ray Thompson

WHEREAS, Memories of a life filled with joyful times and meaningful accomplishments remain to comfort the family and friends of Billy Ray Thompson of Tyler, who passed away on November 5, 2016, at the age of 69; and

WHEREAS, The son of Billy Dale Thompson and Virginia Nell Lytle Thompson, Ray Thompson was born in Monticello, Arkansas, on February 9, 1947; he graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi and went on to complete his master's degree in business administration at Louisiana State University; during Mardi Gras in New Orleans in 1967, he met his future wife, the former Marilyn Miller, and they married on November 28, 1969, in Vicksburg, Mississippi; the couple became the parents of two sons, Eric and Brian, and as the boys began participating in sports, Mr. Thompson delighted in watching their events and devising cutting-edge training regimens for them; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Thompson began his distinguished career in hospital administration at the University of Alabama; subsequently, he became vice president of Lane Memorial Hospital in Zachary, Louisiana, and then senior vice president of Hermann Hospital in Houston; in 1981, he joined Mother Frances Hospital in Tyler, and he was instrumental in launching the first cardiovascular program in East Texas and in setting the institution on the path toward becoming a regional system; a founding executive of the Trinity Mother Frances Health System, he developed its network of clinics, established an expansive emergency medicine program, and created one of the nation's model sports medicine programs; under his guidance, the system gained national recognition for clinical excellence, operational efficiency, and patient safety and satisfaction; moreover, he played a pivotal role in the decision to merge with CHRISTUS Health in 2016, and he was appointed president of that organization; a visionary leader, he was a powerful advocate for the implementation of robotic surgery, the FamilyCARE Center, ConnectCARE, and the Louis and Peaches Owen Heart Hospital, and his efforts led to the creation of the Ornelas Tower, a number of regional health parks, the community hospital in South Tyler, and many other facilities in East Texas; and

WHEREAS, Deeply committed to health care and to the community, Mr. Thompson gave generously of his time and expertise to many professional and community organizations, among them the American Heart Association, the American Cancer Society, the Boy Scouts of America, and Hospice of East Texas; he was also a driving force in the construction of new athletic facilities for both Robert E. Lee and John Tyler High Schools; and

WHEREAS, This high-powered executive had a rare ability to maintain a work-life balance, and he shared countless happy hours relaxing with his beloved family; during 47 years of marriage, he and his wife laughed together every single day, and they enjoyed traveling to the Gulf Coast, the Florida Keys, and especially

their Riverland property in Saint Joseph, Louisiana; Mr. Thompson took hunting trips all over the world and loved cycling and completing his legendary workout routines; his rugged outdoorsy exterior belied a soft heart that melted completely in the company of his three treasured grandchildren, Chase, Reid, and Miller, and he joined his wife in spoiling their Dobermans as well; and

WHEREAS, Ray Thompson left an outstanding legacy through his tremendous contributions to health care in East Texas, and although he is greatly missed, the passage of time will never diminish the joy, warmth, and generosity that he brought into the lives of his loved ones; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 85th Legislature, hereby pay tribute to the memory of Billy Ray Thompson and extend sincere condolences to all who mourn his passing; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be prepared for his family and that when the Texas Senate adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Ray Thompson.

Hughes

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on May 8, 2017, by a rising vote.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate