

RESOLUTION NO. 82 OF 2022

A RESOLUTION THANKING PRESIDENT-CHANCELLOR DR. RAY L. BELTON FOR HIS COMMITMENT, CONTRIBUTIONS, AND YEARS OF LEADERSHIP AT SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AND A&M COLLEGE AND OTHERWISE PROVIDING WITH RESPECT THERETO

BY: COUNCILWOMAN TABATHA TAYLOR

WHEREAS, Dr. Ray L. Belton a native of Shreveport graduated from Southern University at Shreveport (SUSLA). Dr. Belton continued his studies at Southern University A&M College where he graduated first in his class; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Belton earned a Master of Arts in counseling from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and a Doctor of Philosophy in educational administration from the University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Belton is a tenured professor of psychology; and

WHEREAS, in 2015 Dr. Belton made history becoming Southern University's first president-chancellor when the Southern University System Board of Supervisors combined the roles; and

WHEREAS, under Dr. Belton's leadership in this dual role, several new programs and strategic initiatives were implemented System-wide to increase efficiency, boost enrollment, strengthen teaching and learning, enhance technology, improve student success, expand fundraising and philanthropic efforts, and increase alumni engagement; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Belton oversaw the successful Southern Association of Schools – Commission on College's (SACSCOC) reaffirmation of accreditation for the Baton Rouge flagship campus as well as the successful reaffirmation of SACSCOC accreditation and removal of probation for the New Orleans campus; and

WHEREAS, under Dr. Belton's leadership of the System, Southern became one of two institutions in the state of Louisiana to be awarded a license to grow medical marijuana. The Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center, along with vendor Ilera Holistic Health Care, has produced both THC and CBD medical marijuana products, making Southern the first historically Black college in the nation to do so; and

WHEREAS, over the course of four years both retention and graduation rates have evolved at Southern University Baton Rouge (SUBR), the enrollment of first-time freshman has increased by an average of 15 percent, and resources to support campus enhancements have grown by 220 percent. Southern University Baton Rouge currently enjoys its highest rate of alumni giving since the University's inception in 1880; and

WHEREAS, additionally, under Dr. Belton's leadership, the University has experienced unprecedented infrastructural improvements consisting of the establishment of the Southern University Innovation Center, Jaguar Plaza sports complex, upgrades to athletic facilities, 750 student apartments, and a new Student Union Complex; and

WHEREAS, the University directed more than \$6 million to support classroom and laboratory improvements, along with curriculum and faculty professional development. While chancellor, SUSLA acquired more than \$34 million to support capital improvements including: academic structures, student centers, and the first-time development of student apartments (one of only two at community colleges in the state) at the institution; and

WHEREAS, during Dr. Belton's tenure as chancellor of the Shreveport campus, the university enjoyed unprecedented growth resulting in an enrollment increase of more than 156 percent; and

WHEREAS, Southern University System President and Southern University and A&M College Chancellor Dr. Ray L. Belton announced to the Southern University Board of Supervisors that he would retire from the position of president-chancellor effective Fall 2022; and

WHEREAS, Southern University Board of Supervisors Chairman Domoine D. Rutledge said, "We are indebted to Dr. Belton for his many years of service and commitment to the cause of higher education in general, and the Southern University System in particular." "Invariably, his decision-making process reflected the best interest of the institution and the students we serve were always a priority"; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Belton said, "By 2022, I will have served as a chief executive officer for more than 21 years, the first 14 years as chancellor of Southern University Shreveport and then, for seven years as president-chancellor for the System and Southern University Baton Rouge," Belton said. "This also will mark 35 years of service with the University. Over the course of my tenure, I have had the great fortune to work with some exceptionally talented colleagues. Together, I believe our work has enabled us to position the University in a manner that it will continue to be seen as a premier institution within the higher education community."

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Shreveport in due, legal and regular session convened that the Shreveport City Council would like to thank President-Chancellor Dr. Ray L. Belton for his commitment, contributions, and years of leadership at Southern University and A & M College.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that if any provision or item of this resolution or the application thereof is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions, items or applications of this resolution which can be given effect without the invalid provisions, items or application, and to this end, the provisions of this resolution are hereby declared severable.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all resolutions or parts thereof in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

APPROVED AS TO LEGAL FORM:

City Attorney's Office