

1           A RESOLUTION adjourning the Senate in honor and loving memory of Ulysses  
2 Lee "Junior" Bridgeman.

3           WHEREAS, a native of East Chicago, Indiana, Ulysses Lee "Junior" Bridgeman  
4 was a standout high school basketball player who was a member of East Chicago  
5 Washington High School's undefeated 1971 Indiana high school basketball championship  
6 team; and

7           WHEREAS, Junior Bridgeman attended the University of Louisville, where he was  
8 a standout guard for the Cardinals men's basketball team. He was the Missouri Valley  
9 Conference player of the year in 1974 and 1975, and led the Cardinals to the National  
10 Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) basketball tournament's final four in 1975,  
11 where they lost to UCLA in overtime by one point in one of the greatest college  
12 basketball games ever played; and

13           WHEREAS, in three seasons with the Cardinals, Junior Bridgeman averaged 15.5  
14 points, 7.6 rebounds, and 2.7 assists per game as the team compiled a record of 72 wins  
15 against 17 losses during that time; and

16           WHEREAS, after graduation, Junior Bridgeman was selected as the eighth overall  
17 pick in the 1975 NBA draft by the Los Angeles Lakers and was traded to the Milwaukee  
18 Bucks, where he played for most of his career; and

19           WHEREAS, Junior Bridgeman had a long, productive professional career,  
20 primarily as the sixth man for a talented Milwaukee squad that won five consecutive  
21 division titles from 1980 to 1984. Over his 12 seasons, he played in 849 games, averaged  
22 13.6 points per game, and his number 2 jersey was retired by the Bucks; and

23           WHEREAS, Junior Bridgeman was an important and active member of his adopted  
24 hometown of Louisville and supported causes across the Commonwealth. He served as  
25 chair of the University of Louisville's Board of Trustees, and was on the board of the  
26 Louisville Free Public Library, West End School, the Louisville Arena Authority, the  
27 Crusade for Children Foundation, and the African American Heritage Foundation; and

1           WHEREAS, Junior Bridgeman was a business entrepreneur of extraordinary caliber  
2 becoming one of the most financially successful former athletes. He invested in and  
3 owned hundreds of Wendy's and Chili's Grill & Bar restaurants before selling them in  
4 2016, was President and CEO of Bridgeman Foods, Incorporated, became a bottler for  
5 The Coca-Cola Company in 2017 and was making arrangements to extend his bottling  
6 operations to Canada, purchased Ebony and Jet magazines in 2020, was building an  
7 aluminum mill in New Mexico and in 2022 was investing in a bottling facility in  
8 Alabama, both under the auspices of Manna Capital Partners, a firm he cofounded, was  
9 part of the group that bought the Valhalla Golf Club in Louisville, Kentucky, and  
10 purchased a ten percent interest in the Milwaukee Bucks basketball team; and

11           WHEREAS, Junior Bridgeman left these earthly bonds on March 11, 2025, and his  
12 sudden passing left behind a community reeling from the loss of this soft-spoken man  
13 who left a giant impact; and

14           WHEREAS, it is notable that Junior Bridgeman passed away while at a fundraiser  
15 for the Lincoln Heritage Council of the Boy Scouts of America, where he shared a  
16 personal story of not having the financial resources to participate in scouting when he  
17 was a boy and encouraged attendees not to let those barriers impact the next generation of  
18 potential scouts; and

19           WHEREAS, the scores of tributes and accolades to the life and legacy of Junior  
20 Bridgeman can best be summed up by this statement issued by the University of  
21 Louisville: "Today we lost a legend and beloved member of the Louisville basketball  
22 family, Junior Bridgeman leaves an unmatched legacy and we are forever grateful for the  
23 impact he's made on our program, our university and our city. We send our deepest  
24 condolences to the Bridgeman family and all who loved him."; and

25           WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper that the extraordinary life and accomplishments  
26 of Junior Bridgeman be publicly recognized;

27           NOW, THEREFORE,

1 *Be it resolved by the Senate of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of*  
2 *Kentucky:*

3       ➔Section 1. The Senate does hereby express its most profound sympathy upon  
4 the passing of Ulysses Lee "Junior" Bridgeman, recognizes his tremendous  
5 accomplishments in athletics and the business world, and expresses boundless gratitude  
6 for his legacy of community service in Louisville and the Commonwealth.

7       ➔Section 2. When the Senate adjourns this day, it does so in honor and loving  
8 memory of Ulysses Lee "Junior" Bridgeman.

9       ➔Section 3. The Clerk of the Senate is directed to transmit a copy of this  
10 Resolution to the Office of Senator Gerald Neal for presentation to the family of Ulysses  
11 Lee "Junior" Bridgeman.