
WHEREAS, Mrs. Geraldine "Gerry" Fountain Blessey, of Biloxi, Mississippi, was one of 24 truly remarkable Mississippians receiving the Mississippi Ageless Heroes Award for 2002 by the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association; Mrs. Blessey's award was in the category of Creativity; and

WHEREAS, the Ageless Heroes program was created by the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association in 1997 to celebrate the spirit and vitality of our nation's seniors. Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi has taken the program to the local level establishing Mississippi Ageless Heroes, age 65 and over, who are nominated for the award by their friends and families; regional and statewide honorees are selected by independent judges in the categories of Community Involvement, Creativity, Good Neighbor, Love of Learning, New Beginnings and Vitality; they truly are role models whose stories will inspire all who hear them; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Geraldine "Gerry" Fountain Blessey, 79, was born and raised in east Biloxi, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Henry F. Fountain, Sr., who were descendants of the Colonial French that founded Biloxi. Her father was a master carpenter who built many wooden schooners and luggers for the Biloxi fishing fleet; and

WHEREAS, she is the widow of Walter J. Blessey III, mother of three children and grandmother of eight grandchildren. Mrs. Blessey is an active parishioner of the Nativity B.V.M. Catholic Church; and
WHEREAS, Mrs. Blessey attended Biloxi Public Schools, where she excelled in Music. She began her career with the Peoples Bank of Biloxi as a teller and rose through the ranks to become Vice President and Head Bookkeeper of the bank, from which she retired after 30 years; and

WHEREAS, generations to come may someday see Gerry Blessey's determination as a blessing. By dedicating her creative energies to historic preservation, Gerry has helped ensure that many of Biloxi's most beloved landmarks will endure; and

WHEREAS, she has participated in the ongoing efforts to restore the Old Brick House, built between 1790 and the early 1800's, which is now used by the Garden Clubs of Biloxi. She also led petitioners and attended weekly city council meetings to plead the merits of turning a four-acre site on U.S. 90 into a park. The beautiful property, which features a stand of magnificent live oaks still untouched by many hurricanes, will serve as a permanent memorial to honor Biloxi's Tricentennial, as well as the site for the new Ohr-O'Keefe Museum; and

WHEREAS, a member of the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum Board of Directors and the Gulf Coast Symphony Guild, Gerry says she likes to do oil painting in her spare time. But it's her involvement in civic affairs that helps her stay active. "My approach to aging is to think young and look to the future. And I stay involved with my grandchildren"; and

WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we recognize the civic dedication and vitality of this Mississippian who is an inspiration to all citizens, and reminds us all that our only limitations are the ones we impose on ourselves:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby commend and congratulate Mrs. Geraldine "Gerry" Fountain Blessey, recipient of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Mississippi.  

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Mississippi "Ageless Heroes Award" for 2002 in the category of Creativity and wish her continued success in her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be presented to Mrs. Blessey and forwarded to the Biloxi City Council and be made available to the Capitol Press Corps.