



**EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER 18-10**

***FLAGS AT HALF-STAFF –
THOMAS MILTON BENSON, JR.***

WHEREAS, on March 15, 2018, Thomas Milton Benson, Jr. passed away at the age of 90;

WHEREAS, a native of New Orleans, Louisiana, Mr. Benson attended St. Aloysius High School (now Brother Martin) and Loyola University before enlisting in the United States Navy, where he served on the USS South Dakota in World War II;

WHEREAS, after many years of business success in commercial real estate and automobile dealerships in Louisiana and Texas, Mr. Benson purchased the New Orleans Saints in 1985, saving the Saints from moving to Florida;

WHEREAS, during his time as owner, the Saints made the playoffs for the first time in franchise history in 1987; he oversaw the return of the Saints to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina with a win over the Atlanta Falcons in 2006; and his leadership of the team culminated with a win in Super Bowl XLIV over the Indianapolis Colts;

WHEREAS, in 2012, Mr. Benson purchased the New Orleans Hornets and rebranded the team as the Pelicans, the Louisiana State Bird;

WHEREAS, in 2014, to honor Mr. Benson and in appreciation for his support of the Pro Football Hall of Fame, the field at the Canton, Ohio stadium was renamed the “Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium”;

WHEREAS, Mr. Benson’s legacy is also one of philanthropy, as he and his loving wife, Gayle, have generously supported many charitable efforts, including the Gayle and Tom Benson Cancer Center on the campus of Ochsner Medical Center, the World War II museum, and the Team Gleason House for Innovative Living;

WHEREAS, Mr. Benson was also a man of deep faith and a strong supporter of the Catholic Church, and in 2012, the Bensons were awarded the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice for their generosity to the Catholic Church, the highest papal honor that Catholic laypeople can receive; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Milton Benson Jr. was and will remain a true Louisiana original and will leave a legacy in his home state and city for generations to come.

NOW THEREFORE, I, JOHN BEL EDWARDS, Governor of the State of Louisiana, by virtue of the authority vested by the Constitution and laws of the State of Louisiana, do hereby order and direct as follows:

SECTION 1: As an expression of respect and to honor the life of Thomas Milton Benson Jr., the flags of the United States and the State of Louisiana shall be flown at half-staff over the State Capitol and all public buildings and institutions of the State of Louisiana until sunset on Friday, March 23, 2018.

SECTION 2: This Order is effective upon signature and shall remain in effect until sunset, Friday, March 23, 2018, unless amended, modified, terminated, or rescinded prior to that date.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have set my hand officially and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of Louisiana, at the Capitol, in the City of Baton Rouge, on this 23rd day of March, 2018.

s/John Bel Edwards

GOVERNOR OF LOUISIANA