

By Senator Lynn

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Senate Resolution

A resolution expressing regret at the death of James M. Kirton, respected educator in Volusia and Flagler Counties.

WHEREAS, the Florida Senate expresses its deep regret in learning of the death of James M. Kirton, and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kirton served for 12 years as principal of Seabreeze High School and for 2 years as deputy superintendent of schools for Flagler County, and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the Florida Senate commemorate the life of a beloved and effective educator who for 30 years was a teacher, coach, and administrator in Volusia County schools, NOW, THEREFORE,

Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

That this legislative body does pause in its deliberations to pay its respects to the late educator James M. Kirton and that the Florida Senate in session assembled does record this testimonial of esteem and bereavement:

IN MEMORIAM

JAMES M. KIRTON

James M. Kirton was born June 20, 1944, into a family that operated a dairy farm in Volusia County. He grew up working side-by-side with his parents and siblings on the farm and aspired to be a cowboy. However, his father, Myron, insisted that young Jimmy go to college before deciding on an occupation, and that led him to a lifetime vocation as a teacher, coach, and administrator. James M. Kirton made many

1 | admiring friends along the way, including T.K. Wetherell, a
2 | fellow football player and now president of Florida State
3 | University, who declared after his old friend's death that the
4 | two of them "literally were brothers." Another close friend,
5 | Jim Surratt, formerly the Volusia County Superintendent of
6 | Schools, said, "There's never been a person who's ever been an
7 | ideal cowboy better than Jimmy Kirton," and also commended his
8 | friend's sense of "honor and doing what a man is supposed to
9 | do."

10 | In Mr. Kirton's long struggle against the cancer that
11 | claimed him, he credited his wife Eva with inspiring him to
12 | bounce back from surgery and keep fighting. Many of the
13 | doctors who attended him were parents of his former students
14 | at Seabreeze. Other former students include a cancer
15 | researcher who, in a note, apologized to her beloved high
16 | school principal for not finding a cure that would heal him.
17 | In May 2005, James M. Kirton retired to the family land off
18 | Tomoka Farms Road to concentrate on getting better. The 5
19 | months before he died on October 10, 2005, were bittersweet
20 | but were filled with optimism and humor. Another longtime
21 | friend and former coaching colleague, Tony Melachrino, has
22 | declared that "Jimmy" Kirton "never met a student he didn't
23 | like; he loved them all." In response to that generous spirit,
24 | many of those students called, wrote, and visited their former
25 | coach and principal in his last days--a fitting tribute to a
26 | life well lived.

27 | BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution,
28 | with the Seal of the Senate affixed, be transmitted to Mrs.
29 | Eva Kirton, widow of James M. Kirton, as a tangible token of
30 | the sentiments expressed herein and a lasting symbol of the
31 | respect of the members of the Florida Senate.