

# State of Louisiana



**EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER JML 26-031**

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***FLAGS AT HALF-STAFF –  
SHERIFF WILLIAM EARL HILTON***

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**WHEREAS**, former Rapides Parish Sheriff William Earl Hilton tragically passed away on March 23, 2026;

**WHEREAS**, he served as Sheriff for 24 years and retired in 2020 after a lifetime of public service;

**WHEREAS**, he was married for 61 years to his wife Billie Faye Gunter Hilton. Together, they had two children, Shane Hilton and wife, Laurie, and Kristy Dunn and husband, Bubba; one grandchild, Slade Hilton; and step-grandson, Jaxson Fuller;

**WHEREAS**, he dedicated his life to public service, acting as a law enforcement officer for 50 years, and he will be remembered for his exemplary public service and respect he showed everyone;

**WHEREAS**, he knew at a young age he wanted to work in law enforcement, looking up to Sheriff Kelly and his father, who served as a constable;

**WHEREAS**, as Sheriff, he greatly improved the Sheriff's Office, by advocating for better equipment and benefits for employees; founding the Louisiana Youth Academy, Juvenile Boot Camp; increasing parish prison capacity; opening additional sub-stations to reduce response times; establishing a training academy for corrections officers; obtaining a Mobile Command Center and SWAT Team vehicle; and placing a deputy in every school in Rapides Parish to protect children in the community;

**WHEREAS**, he was a pillar in the community, serving on the Region VI Mental Health Advisory Council; the executive board of the Boy Scouts of America Attakappas Council; the Board of Advisors for Renaissance Home for Youth; the Advisory Board of the Salvation Army; and the Central Louisiana Coalition to Prevent Homelessness; as chairman on the Board of Directors for the Food Bank of Central Louisiana; and chaired fundraising events for the Heart Fund, the March of Dimes, and the Red Cross;

**WHEREAS**, he was a 32nd Degree Scottish Rite Mason, Shreveport Consistory; a member of Oliver Masonic Lodge #84 and Gardner Lodge #482; a member of the El Karubah Shrine Temple; and past president of the Cenla Shrine Club;

**WHEREAS**, he had a great love for the outdoors, proudly belonging to the National Rifle Association and many sportsmen organizations;

**WHEREAS**, his call to leadership knew no bounds, extending to his time as president of the Rapides Cattleman's Association and a charter member of the Central Louisiana High School Rodeo Association;

**WHEREAS**, he leaves behind a legacy of kindness, integrity, and compassion, being known for treating everyone around him as Christ called him to, no matter their background or status;

**WHEREAS**, he is survived by his wife, children, grandchildren, sister, and numerous nieces and nephews;

**WHEREAS**, he was preceded in death by his parents, James Thomas "Tom" and Modena "Frankie" Hilton; brother, Herbert Hilton; and sister, Verna Hilton Fussell.

**WHEREAS**, his life exemplified the courage and commitment of those who stand on the Thin Blue Line, a symbol of the brave men and women who dedicate their lives to protecting our communities.

**NOW THEREFORE, I, JEFF LANDRY**, Governor of the State of Louisiana, by virtue of the authority vested by the Constitution and the laws of the State of Louisiana, do hereby order and direct as follows:

Section 1: As an expression of respect and to honor Sheriff William Earl Hilton, the flags of the United States and the State of Louisiana shall be flown at half-staff over the State Capitol and all state buildings from sunrise until sunset on Friday, March 27, 2026.

Section 2: This Order is effective upon signature and shall remain in effect until sunset,  
March 27, 2026.



**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have set my hand officially and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of Louisiana in the City of Baton Rouge, on this 25<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2026.

  
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**Jeff Landry**  
**GOVERNOR OF LOUISIANA**

**ATTEST BY THE SECRETARY  
OF STATE**

  
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**Nancy Landry**  
**SECRETARY OF STATE**