



EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER JBE 2021-11

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***FLAGS AT HALF-STAFF –  
FORMER GOVERNOR EDWIN WASHINGTON EDWARDS***

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- WHEREAS,** former Governor Edwin Washington Edwards passed away on July 12, 2021, at the age of 93;
- WHEREAS,** on May 9, 1972, Edwin Edwards was sworn in as the 50th Governor of the State of Louisiana;
- WHEREAS,** he went on to swear this same oath of office three more times, an unprecedented and unmatched feat in the history of our state, serving a total of four terms as Governor;
- WHEREAS,** over the course of his sixteen years in Louisiana's highest office, he reshaped and modernized the state at pivotal points in its history, he invested wisely during times of prosperity, and his leadership later helped the state overcome shortfalls and tremendous hardship;
- WHEREAS,** Edwin Washington Edwards was born in Avoyelles Parish on August 7, 1927, the son of Clarence and Agnès Edwards;
- WHEREAS,** through his mighty intellect, charismatic wit, and noble ambition, this son of a rural sharecropper and a midwife ascended to the summit of political life in our state;
- WHEREAS,** he served his nation honorably as a cadet in the United States Navy Air Corps during World War II;
- WHEREAS,** he earned his Bachelor's degree and Juris Doctorate from Louisiana State University;
- WHEREAS,** before serving in the state's top office, he served as an ad hoc city court judge in Crowley and then served in the Louisiana Senate from 1964 to 1965;
- WHEREAS,** he further served his state as a member of the House of Representatives in the United States Congress from 1965-1972, first elected in 1965 and winning re-election three times in 1966, 1968, and 1970;
- WHEREAS,** while a member of the United States Congress, Edwards served on the Judiciary, Public Works, and Internal Security Committees, notably taking a stand to support the extension of the Voting Rights Act of 1965;
- WHEREAS,** on February 1, 1972, Edwin Edwards won election to serve as Louisiana's 50th Governor;
- WHEREAS,** a lifelong ambassador of Louisiana's unique cultural heritage, Governor Edwards was the first French-speaking Governor in more than one hundred years when he swore his Oath of Office in both English and French on the steps of the Louisiana State Capitol in Baton Rouge;

**WHEREAS,** Governor Edwards won re-election in 1975 and again swore the Oath of Office in 1976;

**WHEREAS,** on March 12, 1984, Edwin Edwards became the first Governor of Louisiana to return to office for a third term; and in 1992, he again returned to the Capitol for his fourth and final term as Governor;

**WHEREAS,** early in his first term as Governor, Edwin Edwards successfully urged the Legislature to initiate a call for a Constitutional Convention to reshape the State's organizational framework for the modern age, with the resulting document, which he helped formulate, being the framework of our state since 1974, and a model to many other states; he also successfully changed the State's cumbersome elections process, creating Louisiana's unique open-primary election framework which we retain to this day;

**WHEREAS,** he also successfully changed the State's cumbersome elections process, creating Louisiana's unique open-primary election framework which we retain to this day;

**WHEREAS,** over the course of his time as Governor, Edwin Edwards oversaw tremendous advances in the way of life for the citizens of Louisiana, striving to live up to a promise he made in his first inauguration speech to "open wide the doors of opportunity" to all people;

**WHEREAS,** Governor Edwards is survived by his wife Trina, their son Eli, his daughters Anna and Victoria, sons Stephen and David, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren; and

**WHEREAS,** a lifelong public servant and a visionary leader, Governor Edwards was a man of great intellect, compassion, charisma, joy, and deep love for the people of his state; and while he will be greatly missed, the legacy of his work on behalf of the people of Louisiana will live on for many 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 former Governor Edwin Washington Edwards, 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 July 12, 2021, through sunset on the day of his interment.

**SECTION 2:** This Order is effective upon signature and shall remain in effect until sunset on the day of his interment.



**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 12<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2021.

  
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**GOVERNOR OF LOUISIANA**

**ATTEST BY THE  
SECRETARY OF STATE**

  
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**SECRETARY OF STATE**