

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 219

Recognizing and honoring Walter Jerry Payton and expressing the
condolences of the Senate to his family on his death.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 2, 1999

Mr. FITZGERALD (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. LOTT, Mr. COCHRAN, and
Mr. HELMS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered
and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Recognizing and honoring Walter Jerry Payton and express-
ing the condolences of the Senate to his family on his
death.

Whereas Walter Payton was a hero, a leader, and a role
model both on and off the field;

Whereas for 13 years, Walter Payton thrilled Chicago Bears'
fans as the National Football League's (NFL's) all-time
leading rusher—and as one of the greatest running backs
ever to play the game—culminating with his induction
into the Professional Football Hall of Fame;

Whereas after retiring from professional football in 1987,
Payton continued to touch the lives of both his fellow
Chicagoans and citizens of his native state of Mississippi,
as a businessman and a community leader;

Whereas Walter Payton was born in 1954 to Mrs. Alyne Payton and the late Mr. Edward Payton, and his historic career began as a star running back at Columbia High School in his native hometown of Columbia, Mississippi, which he called “a child’s paradise.” He went on to choose Jackson State University over 100 college offers, and to set nine university football records, eventually scoring more points than any other football player in the history of the National Collegiate Athletic Association;

Whereas the first choice in the 1975 NFL draft, Payton—or “Sweetness” as he was known to his fans—became the NFL’s all-time leader in running and combined net yards and scored 110 touchdowns during his career with the Bears;

Whereas Walter Payton made the Pro Bowl nine times and was named the league’s Most Valuable Player twice, in 1977 and 1985;

Whereas in 1977, Payton rushed for a career-high 1,852 yards and carried the Bears to the playoffs for the first time since 1963;

Whereas Payton broke Jim Brown’s long-standing record in 1984 to become the league’s all-time leading rusher, and finished his career with a record 16,726 total rushing yards;

Whereas in 1985–86, Walter Payton led the Bears to an unforgettable 15–1 season and Super Bowl victory—the first and only Super Bowl win in Bears’ history;

Whereas Payton was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1993, and was selected this year as the Greatest All-Time NFL Player by more than 200 players from the NFL Draft Class of 1999;

Whereas Walter Payton matched his accomplishments on the football field with his selfless actions off the field on behalf of those in need. He excelled academically as well as athletically, earning a degree in special education from Jackson State University in just three and one half years, and going on to undertake additional graduate study. Payton worked throughout his adult life to improve the lives of others through personal involvement with many charitable organizations. He was particularly active in working with children facing physical, mental, or economic challenges. In 1988, he established the Halas/Payton Foundation, which continues his legacy of community involvement to help educate Chicago's youth;

Whereas Walter Payton was a dedicated man of faith and principle, who, as a life-long Baptist, was known for his deep reverence for God; and, as a gracious and selfless citizen, was a devoted father with sterling personal integrity and a warm sense of humor. Walter Payton will always be remembered as a true gentleman with a heart full of genuine and active concern for others;

Whereas Walter Payton was truly an American hero in every sense of the term;

Whereas the members of the Senate extend our deepest sympathies to Walter Payton's family and the host of friends that he had across the country; and

Whereas Walter Payton died tragically on November 1, 1999, at age 45, but his legacy will live in our hearts and minds forever: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) hereby recognizes and honors Walter Jerry

3 Payton—

1 (A) as one of the greatest football players
2 of all time; and

3 (B) for his many contributions to the Na-
4 tion, especially to children, throughout his life-
5 time; and

6 (2) extends its deepest condolences to Walter
7 Payton's wife, Connie; his two children, Jarrett and
8 Brittney; his mother, Alyne; his brother, Eddie; his
9 sister, Pam; and other members of his family.

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