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# South Dakota Legislature



## Senate Commemoration 811

Introduced by: **Senators** Foster, Duhamel, Perry, and Schoenfish and **Representatives** Pourier, Andera, Emery, Garcia, Jordan, Muckey, Novstrup, and Uhre-Balk

**A LEGISLATIVE COMMEMORATION, Honoring Thomas Shortbull, a trailblazer and leader dedicated to empowering Native communities through education, advocacy, and leadership.**

WHEREAS, Thomas Shortbull, a trailblazer and visionary leader, has dedicated his life to empowering Native communities, advancing Native education, and advocating for Native voices within South Dakota; and

WHEREAS, Thomas served as the President of Oglala Lakota College in two distinct terms, from 1975 to 1979 and from 1995 to 2017, leaving a transformative legacy that revolutionized the institution and the lives of countless students across South Dakota, particularly within Native communities; and

WHEREAS, under Thomas's leadership, Oglala Lakota College achieved remarkable growth and national recognition, expanding the campus to seven additional centers, and ensuring the preservation of the Lakota culture and language while fostering academic excellence; and

WHEREAS, efforts by Thomas led to the substantial increase in endowments received by Oglala Lakota College, which enabled Oglala Lakota College to expand its offerings and produce highly successful graduates in fields including nursing, education, Native studies, office technology, construction, and auto mechanics; and

WHEREAS, Thomas bolstered Oglala Lakota College to become a top producer of degrees for Native students, with the college excelling in areas such as Native studies, education, business, and social services, and earning high rankings by national assessments of Native American higher education; and



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WHEREAS, Thomas was instrumental in the formation of the Task Force on Indian-State Government Relations in 1973, which recommended progressive legislation that led to the creation of a voting district that enabled Native Americans in Shannon and Todd counties to exercise their rights and elect state representatives who truly reflected their needs; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Shortbull's career and achievements exemplify the power of education to transform lives, build communities, and create lasting change, and his work continues to serve as a beacon of hope for Native communities in South Dakota and the United States;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT COMMEMORATED, by the One Hundredth Legislature of the State of South Dakota, that Thomas Shortbull has made a positive difference to Native communities in the State of South Dakota, and his tireless efforts have contributed to Native students having access to quality education and opportunities to succeed.

