



HR0510

LRB098 12720 MST 47202 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the House of Representatives are
3 saddened to learn of the death of Peoria icon, Harold A. "Pete"
4 Vonachen, on June 10, 2013; and

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WHEREAS, Pete was born on August 31, 1925, in Peoria, to
6 Dr. Harold A. and Bernice (Verner) Vonachen; he served in the
7 U.S. Navy during World War II; he returned home and attended
8 Bradley University, graduating in 1949; and he married Donna J.
9 Hurst on May 11, 1957, in Peoria; and

10

WHEREAS, In 1955, Pete opened Vonachen's Junction
11 restaurant, whose iconic railroad cars, great food, and owner's
12 larger-than-life personality drew patrons from throughout the
13 State; he sold the restaurant in 1970 and became president of
14 Peoria Blacktop, Inc.; and

15

WHEREAS, Pete rescued professional baseball in Peoria when
16 he purchased the Peoria Suns in 1983; his commitment to family
17 entertainment led to many highly successful Peoria Chiefs
18 teams, alternating with Cardinals' and Cubs' affiliations;
19 past and future Hall of Fame players have played in now, Dozer
20 Park, one of the nation's finest Class A stadiums; and

21

WHEREAS, Over his lifetime Pete served as commodore for the

1 Illinois Valley Yacht and Canoe Club, president of the Peoria
2 Pacers College Baseball Team, director of the Greater Peoria
3 Sports Hall of Fame, director of the Peoria Cerebral Palsy
4 Board, and member of the St. Thomas Parochial School Board; he
5 was president of the advisory board for OSF St. Francis Medical
6 Center, vice-president and a trustee for the Peoria Park
7 District, chairman of the City of Peoria Liquor Commission, a
8 member of the Bradley University Chiefs Club, president of
9 Peoria Mobile Medic Ambulance Co., and a member of the board of
10 trustees for Bradley University; he also served as chairman for
11 the Salvation Army Tree of Lights and as honorary chairman of
12 the Children's Miracle Network Telethon at the Children's
13 Hospital of Illinois; and

14 WHEREAS, Pete was awarded the Neve Harms Meritorious
15 Service Sports Award in 1979, the Bradley University
16 Distinguished Alumni Award in 1985, the Sporting News
17 Professional Baseball Class A Minor League Executive of the
18 Year in 1985, the Tri-County Sports Figure of the Year in 1985,
19 the Bradley University Centurion in 1986, the University of
20 Notre Dame Man of the Year in 1988, the Caterpillar Community
21 Service Award, the Salvation Army Other Award in 1991, the
22 Lewis Burger Outstanding Volunteer Fundraising Award in 1992,
23 the National Society of Fundraising Executives Philanthropy
24 Award in 1992, the Robert H. Michel Lifetime Achievement Award
25 in 2002, the Ambassador of Baseball-State of Illinois Chicago

1 Pitch and Hit Club Award in 2005, and the Lions Club
2 Outstanding Achievement Award for JJ Anderson Basketball Camp
3 in 2009; he was inducted into the Greater Peoria Sports Hall of
4 Fame in 1979, the Greater Peoria Sports Hall of Fame 1988, and
5 the Bradley University Sports Hall of Fame in 1994; and

6 WHEREAS, Pete met his best friend, Harry Caray, while
7 managing concessions at Bradley University Fieldhouse in 1950;
8 the Hall of Fame broadcaster would routinely call out to "my
9 good friend, Pete Vonachen, in Peoria" during Cubs games; his
10 1998 eulogy for Harry was celebrated nationally for its humor
11 and its humanity; and

12 WHEREAS, Pete was cherished far and wide for his
13 extraordinary sense of humor, friendships with those he
14 encountered from all walks of life, and his love for baseball;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, Pete was preceded in death by his wife, Donna; his
17 parents; his brothers, Jack and Tom; and his sisters, Mary Ann,
18 Bobbie, and Marta; and

19 WHEREAS, Pete is survived by his daughter, Mary "Mikie"
20 Shadid; his sons, Rocky, Greg (Kathy), Dan (Jennifer), and Mark
21 (Amy); his sister, Susie (Jim) Dawson; his grandchildren, Megan
22 Vonachen, Lauren Shadid, Abby Vonachen, Erica Vonachen, Claire

1 Vonachen, Michelle Vonachen, Druschel Vonachen, Jabe Vonachen,
2 Natalie Vonachen, and Jac Vonachen; therefore, be it

3 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
4 NINETY-EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
5 we mourn the passing of Harold A. "Pete" Vonachen and extend
6 our sincere condolences to his family, friends, and all who
7 knew and loved him; and be it further

8 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
9 presented to the family of Pete Vonachen as an expression of
10 our deepest sympathy.