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LRB104 13858 MST 26685 r

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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate wish to congratulate Rend Lake College President Terry Wilkerson on the occasion of his retirement on June 30, 2025, concluding a distinguished career of more than 30 years of service to the institution and to the Illinois Community College System; and

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WHEREAS, President Wilkerson's journey with Rend Lake College began as a student, earning an Associate's Degree in Applied Science in 1992 before continuing his education at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Plant and Soil Science in 1994 and a Master of Science in Agronomy in 1995; and

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WHEREAS, President Wilkerson returned to his alma mater in 1995 as an adjunct instructor in agriculture, became a full-time faculty member in 1997, and later served as chair of the Applied Science and Technology Division before being named the college's seventh full-time president in April 2012; and

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WHEREAS, President Wilkerson, throughout his presidency, led the college with integrity, innovation, and a deep commitment to student success, while reinforcing its role as a state and national leader in community college education; and

1 WHEREAS, President Wilkerson's tenure saw the development
2 of key facilities and initiatives, including the Agronomy
3 Innovation Center, the RLC Event Center, the Southern Illinois
4 Manufacturing Academy in Mt. Vernon, and the expansion of the
5 Banterra Sports Complex and Waugh Gymnasium, along with the
6 pending construction of a new Allied Health Building; and

7 WHEREAS, President Wilkerson secured tens of millions of
8 dollars in grant funding, launched new educational programs in
9 career-technical education, and established Rend Lake
10 College's first competency-based program in welding
11 technology, while also advancing microcredentials and badging;
12 and

13 WHEREAS, President Wilkerson provided steady leadership
14 during times of statewide and national crises, including the
15 Illinois budget impasse and the COVID-19 pandemic, during
16 which he protected the college's financial stability and
17 strengthened its long-term fund balance by approximately \$20
18 million; and

19 WHEREAS, President Wilkerson helped redefine the role of a
20 community college president, championing cross-institutional
21 collaboration, including a formal alliance with Southeastern
22 Illinois College, and serving in leadership roles, such as
23 chair of the Illinois Community College Council of Presidents

1 and founder of the Illinois Community College Caucus; and

2 WHEREAS, President Wilkerson prioritized leadership
3 development throughout his career, mentoring emerging campus
4 leaders and investing in professional growth programs to
5 strengthen the institution's capacity and continuity; and

6 WHEREAS, President Wilkerson's service extended beyond the
7 college through involvement with the Illinois Workforce
8 Innovation Board, the Illinois Governor's trade mission to
9 Europe, and the International Advisory Board for the Chair
10 Academy; and

11 WHEREAS, President Wilkerson, a lifelong farmer and
12 community advocate, plans to return to Wilkerson Farms upon
13 his retirement, where he will spend well-deserved time with
14 his family and continue his lifelong passion for agriculture;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, President Wilkerson leaves behind a legacy of
17 student-focused leadership, financial stewardship,
18 collaborative spirit, and a deep love for the community he
19 served; therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL
21 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we congratulate Rend

1 Lake College President Terry Wilkerson on his retirement,
2 concluding a distinguished career of more than 30 years of
3 service to the institution and to the Illinois Community
4 College System, and we wish him the best in all his future
5 endeavors; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That that a suitable copy of this resolution be
7 presented to President Wilkerson as a symbol of our respect
8 and appreciation.