



HR0513

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives are saddened to learn of the death of John
4 "Jack" Leese, who passed away on September 30, 2023; and

5 WHEREAS, John Leese was born on April 26, 1931 and grew up
6 in Chicago; he graduated from Lane Tech High School in 1949; he
7 served in the United States Marine Corps; he attended Wright
8 Junior College before he graduated from Northwestern
9 University; and

10 WHEREAS, John Leese's wrestling coaching career began as
11 an assistant coach under Walt Sherman at Glenbrook North High
12 School; he then moved to Leyden High School as an assistant
13 coach under Hall of Fame coach Chuck Farina; and

14 WHEREAS, John Leese became the first full time announcer
15 for the Illinois State High School Association wrestling state
16 meet and held that role for five years, which included
17 announcing the Big Ten Championships and the United States
18 versus Russia meet; and

19 WHEREAS, John Leese worked as a physical education teacher
20 at East Leyden High School for 27 years, retiring after the
21 1989-1990 school year; and

1 WHEREAS, John Leese started as the East Leyden head
2 football coach in 1963, leading the team to a 6 and 2 season
3 and winning the Des Plaines Valley League championship; his
4 team continued winning the title each year from 1970 to 1974,
5 with his 1972 team being named Team of the Year by Chicago
6 Today; and

7 WHEREAS, John Leese had an incredible record of only one
8 losing season in 1964 in his 15 years as head coach, ending his
9 final season with a perfect 13-0 in 1977 at Hancock Stadium at
10 Illinois State University; and

11 WHEREAS, John Leese coached many athletes over the years;
12 his most famous alumnus was three-time Super Bowl-winning Head
13 Coach Mike Shanahan, and more than 50 of his former players
14 became high school and college coaches in football and
15 wrestling; and

16 WHEREAS, John Leese retired from wrestling in 1991, but he
17 continued helping student athletes; he volunteered at the IHSA
18 wrestling state finals up until 2022; and

19 WHEREAS, John Leese received numerous honors throughout
20 his career, including induction into the Lane Tech Hall of
21 Fame (2022-2023), the Chicagoland Sports Hall of Fame (2015),

1 the Illinois Wrestling Coaches and Officials Hall of Fame, the
2 Illinois High School Football Coaches Association Hall of
3 Fame, the Illinois High School Football Coaches Association
4 Hall of Fame, and the Illinois Chapter of National Wrestling
5 Hall of Fame; and

6 WHEREAS, John Leese leaves behind a legacy of service and
7 commitment that continues to inspire student athletes and help
8 them achieve their goals and dreams, and his impact on the
9 lives of student athletes and the East Leyden community will
10 never be forgotten; and

11 WHEREAS, John Leese is survived by his wife, daughter,
12 grandchildren, and great-grandchildren; therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
14 HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
15 we mourn the passing of John "Jack" Leese and extend our
16 sincere condolences to his family, friends, and all who knew
17 and loved him; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
19 presented to the family of John Leese as an expression of our
20 deepest sympathy.