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1 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, It is highly fitting that the Illinois General  
3 Assembly pays honor and respect to those who have made a  
4 difference in their community and the State of Illinois; and

5 WHEREAS, Don Welge of Chester passed away on April 16,  
6 2020; and

7 WHEREAS, Don Welge was born to William H. and Rudelle F.  
8 (Fritze) Welge in St. Louis, Missouri on July 11, 1935; he  
9 married Mary Alice Childers at St. John Lutheran Church in  
10 Chester on August 4, 1962; he served in the U.S. Army; and

11 WHEREAS, Don Welge and his family created the Gilster-Mary  
12 Lee Corporation, one of the largest independent food  
13 processing companies in the United States, establishing food  
14 processing plants on both sides of the Mississippi River and  
15 providing hundreds of good jobs in production, warehousing,  
16 and delivery truck driving; and

17 WHEREAS, Don Welge served as an adviser for the School of  
18 Business at Southern Illinois University of Carbondale and  
19 Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau; he was  
20 also an active Louisiana State University alumnus with the  
21 School of Agriculture; and

1           WHEREAS, Don Welge established a reputation as a supporter  
2 of economic development, serving as a member of the chambers  
3 of commerce in Chester and Steeleville, both in Illinois, and  
4 Perryville, Missouri; he was also a director for the Buena  
5 Vista National Bank; and

6           WHEREAS, Don Welge was a member of St. John Lutheran  
7 Church in Chester; he passionately supported the Boy Scouts  
8 for more than 40 years and previously served as council  
9 president; he served as master of ceremonies for the Fourth of  
10 July celebration held on Kaskaskia Island for many years; and

11           WHEREAS, Don Welge was preceded in death by his parents;  
12 his brother, Bruce Welge; and his brother-in-law, Wib Saak;  
13 and

14           WHEREAS, At the time of his passing, Don Welge was  
15 survived by his wife, Mary Alice Welge; his sons, Robert  
16 (Paige) Welge and Thomas (Tracy) Welge; his brother, Mike  
17 (Betty) Welge; his sister-in-law, Julia Saak; his  
18 grandchildren, Austin Welge, Lauren Welge, Jackson Welge, and  
19 William Welge; and his many nieces, nephews, cousins, and  
20 friends; and

21           WHEREAS, Don Welge worked hard to gain support for the

1 building of a new bridge over the Mississippi River to connect  
2 Illinois and Missouri; and

3 WHEREAS, The Chester Bridge has two 11-foot lanes and  
4 carries 7,000 vehicles per day, connecting the cities of  
5 Chester and Perryville, Missouri across the Mississippi River  
6 along Illinois Route 150 and Missouri Route 51; and

7 WHEREAS, Plans are underway by the Illinois Department of  
8 Transportation and the Missouri Department of Transportation  
9 to replace the Chester Bridge; and

10 WHEREAS, Randolph County of Illinois, the Community  
11 Foundation of Randolph County, Perry County of Missouri, and  
12 the City of Perryville, Missouri have adopted resolutions  
13 supporting naming the new Chester Bridge in honor of Don  
14 Welge; therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL  
16 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE HOUSE OF  
17 REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING HEREIN, that we designate the new  
18 Chester Bridge over the Mississippi River along Illinois Route  
19 150 and Missouri Route 51 as the "Don Welge Memorial Bridge";  
20 and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That the Illinois Department of Transportation

1 is requested to erect at suitable locations, consistent with  
2 State and federal regulations, appropriate plaques or signs  
3 giving notice of the name the "Don Welge Memorial Bridge"; and  
4 be it further

5       RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be  
6 presented to the family of Don Welge, Randolph County of  
7 Illinois, the Community Foundation of Randolph County, Perry  
8 County of Missouri, the City of Perryville, Missouri, the  
9 Secretary of the Illinois Department of Transportation, and  
10 the Secretary of the Missouri Department of Transportation.