

## 1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Amid a quarter-century-plus of decision-making,  
3 Al Way has apparently sent in his final play as head football  
4 coach at Harrisburg High School; and

5 WHEREAS, Following 21 highly-successful seasons, Al Way  
6 has retired as Harrisburg High School's winningest football  
7 coach in school history; and

8 WHEREAS, The Charleston native and Eastern Illinois  
9 University graduate began his football coaching career in  
10 1972 at Eldorado High School, where he served for three years  
11 as an assistant under the late Al "Boz" Adams; upon Mr.  
12 Adams' retirement, Coach Way was named to direct the Eagles'  
13 program in 1975, where the Eagles went 12-7 in two seasons;  
14 in addition to coaching football, Coach Way, also coached  
15 baseball from 1973 to 1976; and

16 WHEREAS, Coach Way was hired at Harrisburg High School in  
17 1977 and served as an assistant under then-head coach Ken  
18 Joggerst for four seasons; in early 1981, less than two  
19 months following Harrisburg's second-place finish in the 1980  
20 Class 3A finals, Al Way took over the controls as Head Coach;  
21 and

22 WHEREAS, Continuing to implement the straight-T,  
23 full-house backfield ground game that became a staple  
24 throughout the 1980s, Coach Way's theory of ball-control and  
25 time-consuming drives - a hand-me-down from former Coach  
26 Adams - ruled over teams which used diversified offenses; the  
27 success of what was considered an antiquated form of football  
28 was stellar, as was the string of success against larger  
29 schools in the old South Seven Conference days; and

30 WHEREAS, Without an organized system of football at the  
31 grade school levels, the Harrisburg High School program

1 developed players from the ground-up as freshmen and still  
2 reigned supreme over opponents that seemingly had more  
3 hands-on experience; and

4 WHEREAS, If not for a bizarre ending to a 1984 loss at  
5 Mount Vernon and a teacher's strike in 1992, Coach Way's  
6 career at Harrisburg High School would have likely started  
7 with 14 consecutive playoff appearances; as much as the  
8 Harrisburg program thrived, the Bulldogs several times found  
9 themselves snake-bit when the playoffs rolled around; twice  
10 the Bulldogs, normally a Class 3A playoff entrant, were  
11 "bumped up" a division; still, the Bulldogs made two  
12 semifinal appearances in Class 4A (1983, 1991), another in  
13 Class 3A, and the 1997 team advanced to the 3A title game  
14 before losing to Maple Park Kaneland; and

15 WHEREAS, Despite all the Bulldogs' success under Coach  
16 Way, Harrisburg had lost at least one regular-season game in  
17 the first 19 years of Coach Way's tenure; that all changed  
18 in the fall of 2000, when Coach Way's career came full-circle  
19 with a perfect season; the 14-0 championship season finally  
20 arrived in the Bulldogs' 16th playoff appearance under Coach  
21 Way; blessed with what can only be described as a dedicated  
22 assemblage of young men, the Bulldogs steamrolled their  
23 opposition en route to the Class 3A championship in  
24 Champaign; the Bulldogs capped the season with a 41-13  
25 victory over Oregon; and

26 WHEREAS, Coach Way's varsity success was not limited to  
27 just football; he also took over the Harrisburg High School  
28 softball program in 1995, and behind the fireballing efforts  
29 of his daughter Chrissy, the Lady Bulldogs took home third  
30 place in the 1996 Class A State finals; coupled with a 30-1  
31 record the year before, Coach Way's record in two seasons as  
32 Lady Bulldogs coach was 60-6, a .909 winning percentage; and

1           WHEREAS, Coach Way, who in 1999 was named to the  
2 Illinois High School Football Coaches Association Hall of  
3 Fame, ranked seventh among active coaches in victories with a  
4 record of 178-71, including a 27-15 log in the post-season;  
5 and

6           WHEREAS, Coach Way will continue to serve as assistant  
7 wrestling coach, as well as keeping his positions in physical  
8 and driver's education; and

9           WHEREAS, Coach Al Way is the devoted husband of Michelle  
10 and the proud father of Scott and Chrissy; therefore, be it

11           RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
12 NINETY-SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
13 we congratulate Coach Al Way on his retirement as football  
14 coach after a stellar coaching career at Harrisburg High  
15 School, and we wish him well in all of his future endeavors;  
16 and be it further

17           RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
18 presented to Coach Al Way as an expression of our esteem.