



HR0144

LRB104 12341 ECR 22521 r

1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives are saddened to learn of the death of Chicago
4 Bears principal owner Virginia Halas McCaskey, who passed away
5 on February 6, 2025; and

6 WHEREAS, Virginia McCaskey was the eldest child of the
7 founder of the Chicago Bears and the National Football League
8 (NFL), George Halas; she received a degree in business
9 management from Drexel University with the goal of serving as
10 her father's secretary; she also joined the Pi Sigma Gamma
11 sorority, the Newman Club, the Panhellenic Council, and the
12 YWCA; her first memory of attending a Chicago Bears game was at
13 the age of two, and she attended her first NFL Championship
14 game at the age of eight; she also attended the 1940 NFL
15 Championship when the Bears won 73-0 with their infamous "T"
16 formation; and

17 WHEREAS, Virginia McCaskey officially served as secretary
18 of the Bears franchise and as a member of the team's board of
19 directors; she voted the shares of herself, her children, and
20 her grandchildren; she and her heirs owned 80% of the Bears,
21 and the team has been in Halas-McCaskey hands since George
22 Halas acquired the then Decatur Staleys from A.E. Staley in
23 1921 and then moved the team to Chicago; and

1 WHEREAS, Virginia McCaskey's father originally intended
2 for her younger brother, George "Mugs" Halas Jr., to inherit
3 the team; however, Mugs tragically died of a heart attack in
4 1979; therefore, Virginia was next in line to inherit the
5 Bears when her father, affectionately known as "Papa Bear",
6 passed away four years later; and

7 WHEREAS, During Virginia McCaskey's tenure as owner, the
8 infamous 1985 Bears won Super Bowl XX in dominant fashion,
9 beating the New England Patriots by a score of 46-10; this was
10 two years after the death of her father and was part of a run
11 of five consecutive NFC North Titles for the Bears from 1984 to
12 1988; and

13 WHEREAS, In the later days of her ownership, Virginia
14 McCaskey became much more of a hands-off owner, leaving the
15 front office roles to her sons, Michael and George; in 1999,
16 they hired someone outside of the family to be the team's
17 president, marking the first time a Halas or McCaskey did not
18 hold that title; Virginia's husband, Ed, previously served as
19 chairman and treasurer of the Bears and acted as co-owner
20 alongside Virginia until his death in 2003; and

21 WHEREAS, On January 21, 2007, Virginia McCaskey accepted
22 the NFC Championship trophy that bears her father's name; she

1 called it her "happiest day so far" after the Bears had beaten
2 the New Orleans Saints, leading to their second Super Bowl
3 appearance; and

4 WHEREAS, In 2022, Virginia McCaskey was one of ten female
5 NFL owners; after the death of Arizona Cardinals owner Bill
6 Bidwill in October 2019, she became the longest tenured owner
7 in the NFL; and

8 WHEREAS, With the team that her father built, Virginia
9 McCaskey was known for being proudly private because she
10 rarely discussed the business aspect of her life; after
11 marrying her husband, Ed McCaskey, in 1943, she had 11
12 children, 21 grandchildren, 40 great-grandchildren, and four
13 great-great grandchildren; she was a Roman Catholic and
14 considered faith, family, and football inseparable in her
15 life; and

16 WHEREAS, Virginia McCaskey turned 102 on January 5, 2025,
17 which was the same day of the final Bears game she would ever
18 see, a win against the Green Bay Packers; she passed away a
19 month later; therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
21 HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
22 we mourn the passing of Virginia Halas McCaskey and extend our

1 sincere condolences to her family, friends, the loyal fans of
2 the Chicago Bears, and all who knew and loved her; and be it
3 further

4 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
5 presented to the family of Virginia Halas McCaskey as an
6 expression of our deepest sympathy.