



HR0895

LRB104 21709 MST 37319 r

1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Standing between First and Fourth Streets on the
3 University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign campus, Memorial
4 Stadium, dedicated in 1924, is a structure revered for its
5 Classic Revival architectural style and for its historical
6 significance both to the University and to the State of
7 Illinois; and

8 WHEREAS, As the stadium committee charged with building
9 the structure wished to build a memorial for the people of
10 Illinois who served, were wounded, and died during World War
11 I, George Huff assembled a group of active and interested
12 alumni in November 1921 that presented a formal request to the
13 Illinois Department of the American Legion for the stadium to
14 be officially recognized as a state memorial; and

15 WHEREAS, After making the request, the stadium committee,
16 the Board of Trustees, the Alumni Association, and the
17 Athletic Association formally began the campaign to build the
18 stadium, which was constructed between 1923 and 1924 and was
19 dedicated as the University of Illinois' Memorial Stadium on
20 October 28, 1924; and

21 WHEREAS, At the October 1924 dedication ceremony, the
22 president of the University of Illinois, David Kinley, said

1 that "This stadium is a memorial to those of the University who
2 died in the World War. We cannot hallow it by our words, but
3 they have hallowed it by their deaths in defense of ideals and
4 principles in which they believed... The uses to which this
5 great structure are put must be uses which exemplify those
6 principles"; and

7 WHEREAS, Those words were a promise to those Illini who
8 gave the ultimate sacrifice in the springtime of their lives;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, To engrave this dedication into the stadium
11 itself, the names of the 189 University of Illinois World War I
12 fallen were inscribed onto the 200 columns that support, mark,
13 and define the structure of the stadium; and

14 WHEREAS, In 2002, the stadium dedication was extended to
15 those who died in World War II and honors the 948 alumni,
16 students, faculty, and staff who were killed in our nation's
17 wars and conflicts since 1918 and whose names are engraved on
18 one of four limestone tablets at the entrances to Memorial
19 Stadium's east and west colonnades; and

20 WHEREAS, When it was originally dedicated in 1924, and for
21 102 years thereafter, the structure continued to be known as
22 Memorial Stadium, an enduring landmark intended to honor those

1 University of Illinois alumni, students, faculty, and staff
2 who died in service to their country in World War I and
3 subsequent conflicts and to remember their sacrifices; and

4 WHEREAS, Memorial Stadium came to be seen as a perpetual
5 place of honor for the 351,153 men and women from Illinois who
6 served in World War I, including the more than 5,000 who died
7 in service; and

8 WHEREAS, Every graduate of the University of Illinois owes
9 a great measure of gratitude for what the University gave
10 them, both in the way of an education and the lessons of life,
11 and the entire State of Illinois owes the same measure of
12 gratitude for gifts both large and small to the University by
13 thousands of alumni, reinforcing the University of Illinois'
14 reputation as a beacon of academic excellence; and

15 WHEREAS, On September 18, 2025, after accepting a \$100
16 million gift from Larry Gies together with his wife, Beth
17 Gies, the renaming of Memorial Stadium was unanimously
18 approved by the university's Board of Trustees, meaning
19 Memorial Stadium would now be known as Gies Memorial Stadium;
20 and

21 WHEREAS, Acknowledging the board's action, Mr. Gies said
22 "This gift is about honoring my father, a true patriot, and

1 every brave soul who has worn or will wear the uniform to
2 defend our country. With this investment we can ensure that
3 this stadium continues to be a place where their sacrifices
4 will never be forgotten and a shining light for every American
5 who protects our freedoms in the future"; and

6 WHEREAS, While Memorial Stadium has always been "a place
7 where their sacrifices will never be forgotten", it is also a
8 reminder that the only names that should be permanently
9 associated with the structure are those who made the ultimate
10 sacrifice and whose names are inscribed on its columns and
11 limestone tablets; therefore, be it

12 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
13 HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
14 we express gratitude to Larry Gies and to Beth Gies for their
15 acts of profound generosity to the University of Illinois
16 System, and that we recognize the debt that Larry Gies feels
17 every day of his life to his father Larry Gies Sr. and to the
18 University that helped to educate him for success in life; and
19 be it further

20 RESOLVED, That we express continuing and undiminished
21 gratitude to those who have fallen in service to the United
22 States of America, this gratitude being symbolized by the
23 recognition of those from the University of Illinois who

1 served and died in World War I and subsequent conflicts; and be
2 it further

3 RESOLVED, That we believe that on October 28, 1924, the
4 University of Illinois made a solemn pledge at the dedication
5 ceremony of Memorial Stadium to those whose names are
6 inscribed on its columns, a pledge that should not be altered
7 for the sake of obtaining funding from alumni or any other
8 entity; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That while we hold the Board of Trustees of the
10 University of Illinois in highest regard, we respectfully
11 object to the Board's decision to change the name of Memorial
12 Stadium to Gies Memorial Stadium; and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That while we are grateful for the generosity of
14 the donors and the intent of the Board of Trustees to
15 acknowledge their gift, we believe that there are other and
16 more appropriate means by which the University can display its
17 gratitude for the donation; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That we call upon the University of Illinois
19 Board of Trustees, the Department of Intercollegiate
20 Athletics, and Larry and Beth Gies to agree that an alternate
21 means of acknowledging their gift is appropriate, and that by
22 doing so we thereby keep faith with the promise made on October

1 28, 1924 to those honored dead whose names are inscribed on the
2 stadium's columns; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That we believe the name of the structure
4 standing between First and Fourth Streets on the campus of the
5 University of Illinois be permanently restored to "Memorial
6 Stadium"; and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
8 delivered to the President of the University of Illinois, the
9 Chairman of the University of Illinois Board of Trustees, the
10 Director of the University of Illinois Division of
11 Intercollegiate Athletics, and Larry and Beth Gies.