



HR0469

LRB098 12508 MST 46925 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the House of Representatives are  
3 saddened to learn of the death of Peoria icon, Harold A. "Pete"  
4 Vonachen, on June 10, 2013; and

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WHEREAS, Harold Vonachen was born on August 31, 1925, in  
6 Peoria, to Dr. Harold A. and Bernice (Verner) Vonachen; he  
7 served in the U.S. Navy during World War II; he returned home  
8 and attended Bradley University, graduating in 1949; and he  
9 married Donna J. Hurst on May 11, 1957, in Peoria; and

10

WHEREAS, In 1955, Harold Vonachen opened Vonachen's  
11 Junction restaurant, whose iconic railroad cars, great food,  
12 and owner's larger-than-life personality drew patrons from  
13 throughout the State; he sold the restaurant in 1970 and became  
14 president of Peoria Blacktop, Inc.; and

15

WHEREAS, Harold Vonachen rescued professional baseball in  
16 Peoria when he purchased the Peoria Suns in 1983; his  
17 commitment to family entertainment led to many highly  
18 successful Peoria Chiefs teams, alternating with Cardinals'  
19 and Cubs' affiliations; past and future Hall of Fame players  
20 have played in now, Dozer Park, one of the nation's finest  
21 Class A stadiums; and

1           WHEREAS, Over his lifetime Harold Vonachen served as  
2 commodore for the Illinois Valley Yacht and Canoe Club,  
3 president of the Peoria Pacers College Baseball Team, director  
4 of the Greater Peoria Sports Hall of Fame, director of the  
5 Peoria Cerebral Palsy Board, and member of the St. Thomas  
6 Parochial School Board; he was president of the advisory board  
7 for OSF St. Francis Medical Center, vice-president and a  
8 trustee for the Peoria Park District, chairman of the City of  
9 Peoria Liquor Commission, a member of the Bradley University  
10 Chiefs Club, president of Peoria Mobile Medic Ambulance Co.,  
11 and a member of the board of trustees for Bradley University;  
12 he also served as chairman for the Salvation Army Tree of  
13 Lights and as honorary chairman of the Children's Miracle  
14 Network Telethon at the Children's Hospital of Illinois; and

15           WHEREAS, Harold Vonachen was awarded the Neve Harms  
16 Meritorious Service Sports Award in 1979, the Bradley  
17 University Distinguished Alumni Award in 1985, the Sporting  
18 News Professional Baseball Class A Minor League Executive of  
19 the Year in 1985, the Tri-County Sports Figure of the Year in  
20 1985, the Bradley University Centurion in 1986, the University  
21 of Notre Dame Man of the Year in 1988, the Caterpillar  
22 Community Service Award, the Salvation Army Other Award in  
23 1991, the Lewis Burger Outstanding Volunteer Fundraising Award  
24 in 1992, the National Society of Fundraising Executives  
25 Philanthropy Award in 1992, the Robert H. Michel Lifetime

1 Achievement Award in 2002, the Ambassador of Baseball-State of  
2 Illinois Chicago Pitch and Hit Club Award in 2005, and the  
3 Lions Club Outstanding Achievement Award for JJ Anderson  
4 Basketball Camp in 2009; he was inducted into the Greater  
5 Peoria Sports Wall of Fame in 1979, the Greater Peoria Sports  
6 Hall of Fame 1988, and the Bradley University Sports Hall of  
7 Fame in 1994; and

8 WHEREAS, Harold Vonachen met his best friend, Harry Caray,  
9 while managing concessions at Bradley University Fieldhouse in  
10 1950; the Hall of Fame broadcaster would routinely call out to  
11 "my good friend, Pete Vonachen, in Peoria" during Cubs games;  
12 his 1998 eulogy for Harry was celebrated nationally for its  
13 humor and its humanity; and

14 WHEREAS, Harold Vonachen was cherished far and wide for his  
15 extraordinary sense of humor, friendships with those he  
16 encountered from all walks of life, and his love for baseball;  
17 and

18 WHEREAS, Harold Vonachen was preceded in death by his wife,  
19 Donna; his parents; his brothers, Jack and Tom; and his  
20 sisters, Mary Ann, Bobbie, and Marta; and

21 WHEREAS, Harold Vonachen is survived by his daughter, Mary  
22 "Mikie" Shadid; his sons, Rocky, Greg (Kathy), Dan (Jennifer),

1 and Mark (Amy); his sister, Susie (Jim) Dawson; his  
2 grandchildren, Megan Vonachen, Lauren Shadid, Abby Vonachen,  
3 Erica Vonachen, Claire Vonachen, Michelle Vonachen, Druschel  
4 Vonachen, Jabe Vonachen, Natalie Vonachen, and Jac Vonachen;  
5 therefore, be it

6 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
7 NINETY-EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
8 we mourn the passing of Harold Vonachen and extend our sincere  
9 condolences to his family, friends, and all who knew and loved  
10 him; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
12 presented to the family of Harold Vonachen as an expression of  
13 our deepest sympathy.