



SR0116

LRB102 17253 ECR 22723 r

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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate are saddened to learn of the death of Barton "Bart" Francis Wills, a lifelong resident of Champaign, who passed away on February 19, 2021; and

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WHEREAS, Bart Wills was born to Betty Louise Reifsteck Wills and Creed Airol Wills on January 22, 1955; he graduated from Champaign Central High School in 1973; he earned an Associate Degree in Applied Science from Parkland College and a Bachelor of Science in Social Work from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale; and

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WHEREAS, Bart Wills first served as director of the Champaign County Survival Skills and Youth Employment Program and later as director of Champaign County Youth Services; he then entered the insurance field in 1982; he began his insurance career with Prudential and then moved into an equity ownership agreement with First Alliance Financial Group, Inc. in 1991; in 2004, he continued his equity ownership with the Dimond Brothers Insurance agency after its merger with First Alliance; he was also a registered representative with LPL Financial; he specialized in employee benefits and pension plans for businesses; he earned the coveted designations of registered health underwriter (RHU) in 1999 and chartered life

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1 underwriter (CLU) in 2003; and

2 WHEREAS, Bart Wills contributed to his community through
3 both professional and social organizations; he served as a
4 board member, a Political Action Committee member, and as
5 state regional director of the Illinois Association of
6 Insurance and Financial Advisors, as president and legislative
7 chairperson for the Champaign Area Life Underwriters, as a
8 member of the Champaign County Mental Health Board, as
9 president and a committee member for the University of
10 Illinois Baseball Dugout Club, and as a board member for the
11 Illinois Rebounders; he also was a contributing sponsor for
12 the Red Ribbon anti-drug campaign for the Prairie Center
13 Health System, Inc. and belonged to the Parkland College and
14 SIU Alumni organizations; and

15 WHEREAS, Bart Wills was an outstanding athlete, who was
16 known as a tough and highly competitive player with a
17 fun-loving attitude; he played as an undersized center for
18 Champaign Central's 1972 Big 12 conference championship
19 football team; he played softball through 2019 and was a key
20 member of the Illinois Softball Association Hall of Fame teams
21 Gery & Al's and the English Brothers; he was selected to play
22 on many all-state softball teams, multiple Twin-City
23 championship teams, and state championship teams; the
24 highlight of his softball career was starring for a World

1 Championship Senior softball team in 2017 at the age of 62;
2 although he played recreational basketball, his passion was
3 slow-pitch softball, and he was one of the best for more than
4 four decades; and

5 WHEREAS, Bart Wills was a die-hard Cardinals fan and was a
6 longtime season ticket holder; he also enjoyed music, cars,
7 and travel, but his greatest joy was his family; and

8 WHEREAS, Bart Wills is survived by his daughter, Rachel;
9 his brother, Brian; his nephew, Joseph "J.P." Wills; and his
10 sister, Rebecca (Jeffery) Powell; therefore, be it

11 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL
12 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
13 Barton "Bart" Francis Wills and extend our sincere condolences
14 to his family, friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be
15 it further

16 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
17 presented to the family of Bart Wills as an expression of our
18 deepest sympathy.