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HOUSE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives are pleased to recognize notable achievements in college football in the State of Illinois; and

WHEREAS, Among the nation's 117 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division 1-A major-college football programs, Northern Illinois tied for the nation's third-best won-lost record this season at 10-2 and ranked in the Top 10; the teams with the top regular-season records were Oklahoma (12-1), Louisiana State (12-1), Miami (Ohio) (12-1), Boise State (12-1), Southern California (11-1), Texas Christian (11-1), Northern Illinois (10-2), Ohio State (10-2), Florida State (10-2), Miami (Florida) (10-2), Michigan (10-2), and Texas (10-2); and

WHEREAS, Northern Illinois University was the first Mid-American Conference football program to beat two Top 25 Bowl Championship Series opponents -- No.13/No.15 Maryland and No. 21 Alabama -- in the same season; the Huskies also set a school record with a third triumph over a BCS program (Iowa State) this year; and

WHEREAS, Northern Illinois led the official 2003 coaches' All-Mid-American Conference team with 10 all-league performers, including a school record seven First-Team All-MAC selections; Miami (Ohio) placed second with nine All-MAC players; NIU also led the MAC West Division in league Player of the Week awards; and

WHEREAS, The Huskies were led through their 2003 season by the nationally distinguished Head Football Coach Joe Novak; and

WHEREAS, Head Coach Novak's efforts to revitalize the Huskies football program have inspired staff, players, and NIU

1 students to embrace the virtues of integrity, loyalty, and
2 respect; these values are echoed with his team's steady ascent
3 into the Mid-American Conference's upper echelon the last four
4 years; and

5 WHEREAS, Coach Novak was named the 2003 Region 3 Division
6 1-A Coach of the Year by the American Football Coaches
7 Association and was among 11 candidates for the prestigious
8 2003 Bobby Dodd National Coach of the Year Award; and

9 WHEREAS, NIU has four graduating seniors and two coaches in
10 post-season all-star games: Tailback Michael Turner (East-West
11 Shrine Classic and Senior Bowl), cornerback Randee Drew (Las
12 Vegas All-American Classic and Blue-Gray Game), placekicker
13 Steve Azar (Blue-Gray Game and Hula Bowl), strong safety Akil
14 Grant (The Villages Gridiron Classic), plus head coach Joe
15 Novak (Blue-Gray Game), and defensive coordinator Scott Shafer
16 (Blue-Gray Game); and

17 WHEREAS, Northern Illinois is one of the only two
18 major-college programs this season to feature a 1,500-yard
19 rusher (tailback Michael Turner with 1,648), a 2,500-yard
20 passer (quarterback Josh Haldi with 2,544), and a 1,000-yard
21 receiver (split end P.J. Fleck with 1,028 yards); the other
22 school was Michigan; and

23 WHEREAS, NIU began the season with five student-athletes
24 mentioned on seven national award "watch lists": tailback
25 Michael Turner (Doak Walker National Runningback Award and
26 Walter Camp Player of the Year Award), center Todd Ghilani
27 (Outland Trophy and Rimington Award), placekicker Steve Azar
28 (Lou Groza National Placekicker Award), linebacker Nick Duffy
29 (Butkus Award), and defensive end Travis Moore
30 (Rotary-Lombardi Award); and

31 WHEREAS, During the regular season, Northern Illinois

1 tailback Michael "The Burner" Turner was the nation's Number 1
2 active career rusher and finished Number 13 on the all-time
3 NCAA major-college rushing list with 4,941 career yards; he is
4 the Number 2 all-time rusher in the Mid-American history and
5 Number 1 in the NIU record book; and

6 WHEREAS, NIU senior split end P.J. Fleck was named to the
7 2003 College Sports Information Directors of America
8 Second-Team Academic All-America squad; during the season, he
9 was the USA Today.com National Player of the Week for his
10 record-setting performance vs. Ohio (14 receptions for an
11 NIU-record 234 yards and one touchdown); and

12 WHEREAS, NIU senior tailback Michael Turner was named to
13 the 2003 The Sporting News Second-Team All-America, 2003
14 Associated Press Second-Team All-America and 2003 CNN-Sports
15 Illustrated Second-Team All-America squads; the frosh
16 offensive tackle Doug Free was named to the 2003 The Sporting
17 News Third-Team Frosh All-America unit; and Steve Azar was
18 named to the 2003 Collegefootballnews.com Honorable Mention
19 All-American Team; and

20 WHEREAS, Northern Illinois established a new home
21 attendance record, averaging 23,575 spectators per game in
22 seven home dates this season; NIU had three sellout crowds on
23 Brigham Field at Huskie Stadium this year, Maryland (28,018),
24 Iowa State (28,218), and Homecoming versus Western Michigan
25 (28,221); and

26 WHEREAS, Assistant Coaches for the 2003 Huskies are Scott
27 Shafer, Matt Canada, Bill Bleil, DeAndre Smith, Sam Pittman,
28 Greg Bower, George McDonald, Mike Sabock, and Denny Doornbos;
29 support personnel are Phil Voorhis, Dick Townsend, Tim Daoust,
30 Alan Rood, John Hauser, Julie Edwards, and Joyce James; and

31 WHEREAS, The members of the 2003 Huskies are Chris Acevedo,

1 Aaron Anderson, Brian Atkinson, Steve Azar, Arian Bagheri,
2 Mario Balistreri, Dallas Bassett, Brad Benson, Keenan Blalark,
3 Brent Blaschka, Andre Brown, Charnzie Carey, Jarret Carter,
4 Efrain Cervantes, Foster Chambers, Brad Cieslak, Leonard
5 Cooksey, Curtis Crossley, Adrian Davis, Brandon Davis, Keafta
6 Dokes, Randee Drew, Nick Duffy, Jake Ebenhoch, Joel Ellis, Shea
7 Fitzgerald, P.J. Fleck, Devron Francis, Jason Frank, Doug Free,
8 Anthony Gallagher, Todd Ghilani, Ryan Gilbert, Akil Grant, Josh
9 Haldi, Adriel Hansbro, Alvah Hansbro, A.J. Harris, Jason
10 Hawkins, Lionel Hickenbottom, Joe Hilby, Quince Holman, Phil
11 Horvath, Greg Huebbe, Sam Hurd, Jason Hutton, Frank Irby,
12 Dossie Jennings, Charles Johnson, Javan Lee, Rob Lee, Andy
13 Lothson, Ben Lueck, Pat McCabe, David McDermott, Justin
14 McIntyre, Mychael McKay, Bob McLearn, Aleks Miskov, Travis
15 Moore, Andre Morris, Shedrick Mossman, Lorenzo Nichols, Jake
16 Nordin, Jason Orozco, Mark Orszula, Greg Owens, Dan Passarelli,
17 Keith Perry, Eric Pittman, Shatone Powers, Cas Prime, Jeremy
18 Pugh, Turner Pugh, Pat Raleigh, Aaron Reese, Mark Reiter,
19 Vinson Reynolds, Edgar Rodriguez, Matt Rogers, Chris Salvant,
20 Adam Schroeder, Shaun Schroeder, Kevin Serfort, Dan Sheldon,
21 Deon Smith, Ray Smith, Anthony Spacucello, Kursten Strothman,
22 Nickolas Sykes, Gerard Taylor, Joe Thomas, Jimmy Toussaint,
23 Dennis Tovar, Antonio Tribble, Michael Turner, Zach Ullrich,
24 Dustin Utschig, Brian Van Acker, Jake VerStraete, Robert
25 Wallace, Marlon Watson, Ken West, Martin Wilson, Garrett Wolfe,
26 Seren Woodfork, and Kevin Woods; therefore, be it

27 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
28 NINETY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
29 congratulate Head Coach Joe Novak and the Northern Illinois
30 University Huskies for a successful 2003 season; and be it
31 further

32 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
33 presented to each of the coaches, staff, and members of the
34 Northern Illinois University football team as an expression of

1 our esteem and with our best wishes for their future success.