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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, In 1963, Coach George Ireland led the Loyola
3 Chicago Ramblers to the NCAA basketball championship; the team
4 lost only 2 games that season and led the nation in scoring
5 with 91.8 points per game; and

6 WHEREAS, Coach Ireland and the Loyola University teams of
7 the early 1960s are considered by many to be responsible for
8 ushering in a new era of racial equality in the sport by
9 shattering all color barriers in NCAA men's basketball; and

10 WHEREAS, It is difficult to appreciate what Coach Ireland
11 and his team went through, starting in 1961, in breaking what
12 had been a longstanding "gentleman's agreement" to not play
13 more than 3 African-American players; and

14 WHEREAS, During the 1962-1963 season, Coach Ireland played
15 4 African-American Loyola starters in every game; the Ramblers
16 became the first team in NCAA Division I history to play an all
17 African-American lineup, doing so in a game against Wyoming in
18 December of 1962; and

19 WHEREAS, In 1963, Loyola shocked the nation and changed
20 college basketball forever by starting 4 African-American
21 players in the NCAA Tournament, as well as the championship

1 game; and

2 WHEREAS, Despite their success during that season, players
3 had to endure terrible bigotry, including racial taunts and
4 abuse; and

5 WHEREAS, Coach Ireland received countless pieces of hate
6 mail from the KKK and other racist individuals and tried to
7 shield his team in every way possible; and

8 WHEREAS, The team remained focused on the sport they loved,
9 despite knowing that police surrounded the sports facility
10 because violence might erupt at any moment; and

11 WHEREAS, Loyola's defeat of 2-time defending NCAA champion
12 Cincinnati, in overtime by a score of 60-58, was the crowning
13 achievement in the school's nearly decade-long struggle with
14 racial inequality in men's college basketball, highlighted by
15 the tumultuous events of that year's NCAA Tournament; and

16 WHEREAS, Loyola's 1963 NCAA title was historic, not only
17 because of the racial makeup of Loyola's team, but also because
18 Cincinnati had started 3 black players, making 7 of the 10
19 starters in the 1963 NCAA Championship game African-American;
20 and

1 WHEREAS, The City of Chicago has many storied sports teams,
2 but the Loyola Ramblers basketball team of 1963 and Coach
3 Ireland hold an exalted place because they are the only
4 Division I Illinois basketball team to win a national
5 championship, and because they paved the way for the
6 long-overdue integration of races in college basketball prior
7 to the 1964 Civil Rights Act; and

8 WHEREAS, All 5 starting players from the national
9 championship game graduated from Loyola with degrees; several
10 went on to earn advanced degrees in law and business; and

11 WHEREAS, The journey of the Ramblers is not just the story
12 of an underdog team overcoming great odds to beat favored
13 Cincinnati, a much larger basketball program that held the
14 number 1 ranking and had won the previous 2 national
15 championships; the real significance of this coach and this
16 team is the lasting impact of their bravery for having broken
17 the racial barrier in college basketball that had been allowed
18 to prevail for decades; and

19 WHEREAS, The 2013 Hall of Fame induction season will mark
20 the 50th anniversary of the Loyola Basketball Championship; and

21 WHEREAS, Both Coach Don Haskins and the players of the 1966
22 Texas Western College Miners have been inducted to the Naismith

1 Hall of Fame in recognition of their achievement as the first
2 all-African-American college basketball team to win the
3 national championship; therefore, be it

4 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
5 NINETY-SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
6 we wholeheartedly urge the relevant authorities to nominate and
7 induct Coach George Ireland and the 1963 Loyola Chicago
8 basketball championship team into the Naismith Memorial
9 Basketball Hall of Fame.