

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 56

BY SENATOR SEABAUGH

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To commend Wilbert Ellis upon receiving the 2024 Louisiana Sports Ambassador Award and on being inducted into the 2024 class of the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame.

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Sports Writers Association established the Ambassador Award to recognize individuals who have made long-term exemplary contributions to the perception of Louisiana through their ties to the state's sports landscape; and

WHEREAS, the Ambassador Award is not bestowed annually, but rather on occasion, as determined by the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame Selection Committee and, this year, the Selection Committee has selected Wilbert Ellis as the second recipient of this esteemed award; and

WHEREAS, Wilbert Ellis, fondly known as Coach Ellis, has exemplified outstanding leadership, dedication, and commitment throughout his life-long coaching journey, leaving an indelible mark on the lives of countless individuals; and

WHEREAS, a native of Ruston, Louisiana, Coach Ellis' journey began with a childhood passion for athletics and a natural inclination towards leadership, nurtured by the lessons instilled by his parents about the importance of giving back to the community; and

WHEREAS, graduating from Grambling State University in 1959 with a degree in physical education, Coach Ellis spent thirty seasons as the head baseball coach, the second baseball coach in the school's history, and a grand total of forty-three seasons, including time as a graduate assistant and assistant coach, for the Grambling State University baseball program, guiding the Tigers to three Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC) titles, five SWAC Western Division crowns, five National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Tournament appearances, amassing a record of 743 wins, 463 losses, and one tie, and becoming one of the all-time winningest baseball coaches in the history of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, Coach Ellis' leadership and commitment to excellence were further demonstrated through his roles as Assistant and Associate Director of Athletics at Grambling, working closely with legendary coaches Eddie Robinson and Fred Hobdy, bringing the New York Yankees in for exhibition games, and overseeing the construction of Grambling State's new baseball stadium; and

WHEREAS, named SWAC Coach of the Year seven times (1978, '83, '84, '85, '91, '98, and '99), Coach Ellis' achievements have been duly recognized through his induction into prestigious halls of fame including the American Baseball Coaches Association, Southwestern Athletic Conference, and Louisiana Justice; and

WHEREAS, throughout his coaching career, Coach Ellis attended national coaches conventions to learn different ways to make an impact in kids' lives, enriching his dedication to youth development and the promotion of sportsmanship and wellness; and

WHEREAS, beginning in 1990, Coach Ellis conducted baseball camps in Omaha, Nebraska, as part of the NCAA College World Series; his tireless efforts in working with youth were recognized by the Great Plains Black History Museum in Omaha which established the Coach Wilbert Ellis "Service to Youth, Sports, Health, and Wellness" award in his honor; the award is presented annually during the College World Series; and

WHEREAS, each summer, Coach Ellis conducts the Wilbert Ellis Baseball Clinic, an annual free youth clinic teaching baseball fundamentals and life knowledge to kids and includes parent sessions where local police, school administrators, and mental health professionals talk to parents about how to be better and improve the community; and

WHEREAS, Coach Ellis' philanthropic contributions to the community have been recognized and celebrated, including receiving the 2015 Robert E. Russ Award for his outstanding charitable efforts and being honored with the 2021 Bill Best Humanitarian Award by the Ruston Rotary Club, underscoring his unwavering commitment to improving the lives of others; and

WHEREAS, Grambling State University, Coach Ellis' beloved alma mater, has honored this outstanding man through induction into the Grambling Legends Sports Hall of Fame, retirement of his #31 baseball jersey, and naming the baseball stadium on the Grambling State University campus, the Wilbert Ellis Field at R.W.E. Jones Park.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend Wilbert Ellis upon receiving the 2024 Louisiana Sports Ambassador Award and on being inducted into the 2024 class of the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Wilbert Ellis.

---

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

---

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES