

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 27

BY SENATOR HENSGENS

A RESOLUTION

To commend the Louisiana State University at Eunice head baseball coach and athletic director Jeff Willis on being named to the National Junior College Athletic Association Coaches Hall of Fame.

WHEREAS, Louisiana State University at Eunice (LSUE) Bengal baseball head coach and athletic director, Jeff Willis, has been named to the 2023 class of the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Baseball Coaches Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, Jeff Willis attended Dumas High School in Dumas, Texas, where he was a Mizuno High School All-American baseball player, All-State wrestler, and All-District football player; and

WHEREAS, Jeff Willis played two years as an infielder for the Division I, University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) Trojans after playing junior college baseball, and during his two years at UALR, the Trojans qualified for the Sun Belt Conference Tournament both years and saw the team set a school record for victories in a season; and

WHEREAS, at the age of 24, Jeff Willis took over as the baseball coach at LSUE in 2003 and has established the LSUE baseball program as one of the most dominant junior college programs in the nation; and

WHEREAS, in the twenty seasons Coach Willis has been the baseball coach, LSUE has a 942-213 record (.815 winning percentage) which is the second-highest winning percentage in the history of college baseball across all divisions; and

WHEREAS, with Coach Willis at the helm, the LSUE Bengal baseball team has won seven NJCAA National Championships and is tied for the most in the sport of NJCAA history from one school, made ten World Series appearances, captured eleven Regional Championships, and won ten District Championships; and

WHEREAS, Coach Willis has been the recipient of eleven American Baseball Coaches Association Diamond Regional Coach of the Year Awards, eleven NJCAA Region 23 Coach of the Year Awards, ten NJCAA District Coach of the Year Awards, a Louisville Slugger Coach of the Year Award, and seven NJCAA National Coach of the Year Awards; and

WHEREAS, after guiding his Bengals to their sixth National Championship in 2018, Coach Willis was awarded the Skip Bertman National Coach of the Year Award by the National College Baseball Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, the Junior College Baseball Blog (The JBB) named LSUE baseball the "Team of the Decade" for 2010 to 2019, encompassing all junior college programs in the nation; and

WHEREAS, in 2021, Coach Willis steered LSUE to the NJCAA National Championship with a 51-7 record, securing eight wins in the postseason over Top 15 ranked teams; and

WHEREAS, Coach Jeff Willis is in his 21st season as the head baseball coach of the LSUE baseball team and his 19th year as athletic director; and

WHEREAS, Coach Willis has sent more than 200 student-athletes to four-year institutions in his time in Eunice, has had 57 players and/or signees drafted by Major League Baseball, coached 60 all-region players, 25 All-Americans, three National Defensive Players of the Year, and two National Players of the Year.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend the Louisiana State University at Eunice head baseball coach and athletic director Jeff Willis on being named to the National Junior College Athletic Association Coaches Hall of Fame.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Coach Jeff Willis.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE