

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 42

BY SENATOR HENSGENS

A RESOLUTION

To recognize the creation of the Walter Hauck NJCAA Coaches Association President of the Year Award and to honor Coach Jeff Willis of Louisiana State University at Eunice as the inaugural recipient.

WHEREAS, the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) serves as a vital organization in promoting collegiate athletics and supporting the academic and athletic endeavors of student-athletes across the nation; and

WHEREAS, in the spring of 2024, the NJCAA Coaches Association established the Walter Hauck NJCAA Coaches Association President of the Year Award to recognize exceptional leadership, service, and devotion demonstrated by a member institution's president in support of the NJCAA's mission and student-athletes; and

WHEREAS, the award honors the extraordinary legacy of the late Walter Hauck, a beloved figure in the NJCAA community whose over four decades of service at Westchester Community College (New York) included roles as head bowling coach, head golf coach, assistant athletic director, and longstanding President of the NJCAA Bowling Coaches Association; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hauck's distinguished career was marked by his induction into both the NJCAA Bowling Coaches Association Hall of Fame and the Westchester Community College Sports Hall of Fame, as well as his receipt of the 2009-2010 Mary Ellen Leicht Service Award; and

WHEREAS, this award, named in his honor, ensures that Mr. Hauck's memory, leadership, and tireless advocacy for junior college athletics will endure; and

WHEREAS, Coach Jeff Willis of Louisiana State University Eunice (LSUE) has been named the inaugural recipient of the Walter Hauck Award in 2025 in recognition of his outstanding leadership, service, and commitment to the NJCAA and its student-athletes; and

WHEREAS, Coach Willis, now in his 23rd season as head baseball coach and 21st year as athletic director at LSUE, has amassed an impressive career record of 1,051 wins to just 226 losses, with eight NJCAA Division II National Championships and the successful transition of the program to Division I in the 2024-25 season; and

WHEREAS, Coach Willis has also been an influential national leader, serving as a long-standing member of the American Baseball Coaches Association (ABCA) and as its NJCAA representative, championing the interests of junior college coaches and athletes nationwide; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his numerous coaching accolades - including seven NJCAA National Coach of the Year Awards - Coach Willis is known for his integrity, problem-solving, and deep commitment to student-athlete welfare, as reflected in praises from LSUE President Dr. Nancee Sorenson.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby recognizes the creation of the Walter Hauck NJCAA Coaches Association President of the Year Award and congratulates LSUE's Coach Jeff Willis on his historic achievement as the award's first honoree.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE