



HR0815

LRB103 40851 MST 73788 r

1

HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives wish to congratulate Dr. Jonah Rice on his
4 retirement after dedicating three decades of his life to the
5 field of higher education and leaving an indelible mark on
6 Southeastern Illinois College (SIC); and

7 WHEREAS, Dr. Rice began his journey in 1990 as a junior
8 faculty member, and his commitment to SIC has been steadfast;
9 he played a pivotal role in establishing the college's theatre
10 program and coached multiple national championship speech and
11 debate teams; over the years, he progressed through various
12 roles, serving as chair for the Humanities Division and
13 eventually assuming the mantle of interim president in 2009;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, Dr. Rice is a true product of SIC and Southern
16 Illinois; his educational journey began after graduating from
17 Carrier Mills High School; he earned an Associate of Arts from
18 SIC before furthering his studies at Bradley University,
19 Central Michigan University, and Regent University,
20 culminating in a Ph.D.; and

21 WHEREAS, Dr. Rice's influence extended beyond the
22 classroom as a distinguished coach for the nationally renowned

1 SIC Forensic Falcons speech program; he also played a crucial
2 role in steering the college through successful
3 reaccreditations with the Higher Learning Commission, further
4 solidifying SIC's reputation for academic excellence; and

5 WHEREAS, Dr. Rice's leadership and advocacy garnered
6 widespread recognition throughout his tenure; he served as
7 president of the Illinois Community College Presidents Council
8 and received accolades such as the Advocacy Award from the
9 Illinois Community College Trustees Association; and

10 WHEREAS, Dr. Rice's steadfast guidance ensured SIC's
11 resilience and continued growth despite facing numerous
12 challenges, including the 2012 Leap Day Tornado, the historic
13 budget impasse of 2016-2017, the dropping district population,
14 losses in the local economy, and a pandemic; his strategic
15 vision, coupled with his ability to forge meaningful
16 partnerships, resulted in transformative initiatives,
17 including the establishment of the Ella Elizabeth Hise Museum
18 of Regional Art on the Harrisburg campus and a new Stanford D.
19 Williams Career and Training Center in Carmi; and

20 WHEREAS, Dr. Rice also spearheaded the establishment of
21 several innovative programs that have enriched the academic
22 landscape of SIC, including biofuels, outdoor recreation,
23 outfitter wildlife management, and powersports technology;

1 additionally, he played a pivotal role in the development of
2 new campus teams, including bowling, archery, and esports,
3 catering to diverse student interests; and

4 WHEREAS, Dr. Rice's impact at SIC is defined by his
5 resolute dedication to the institution's mission and his
6 profound impact on countless students, faculty, and staff; as
7 he embarks on a new chapter, he leaves behind a legacy of
8 servant leadership, resilience, and unwavering commitment to
9 educational excellence; and

10 WHEREAS, Dr. Rice cherishes time with his wife, Megin, and
11 their three adult children; he looks forward to pursuing
12 personal interests, including writing, woodworking, cabin
13 rental, consulting, and possibly even venturing into politics,
14 all while cherishing the memories and lessons learned during
15 his tenure at Southeastern Illinois College; therefore, be it

16 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
17 HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
18 we congratulate Dr. Jonah Rice on his retirement after
19 dedicating three decades of his life to the field of higher
20 education and leaving an indelible mark on Southeastern
21 Illinois College; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be

1 presented to Dr. Rice as a symbol of our respect and esteem.