

Chapter No. 2209
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SENATE
CONCURRENT RESOLUTION
No. 663

Originated in Senate

Greg Wilch

Secretary

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 663

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND COMMENDING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI ATHLETIC DIRECTOR RICHARD GIANNINI ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT.

WHEREAS, University of Southern Mississippi Director of Athletics Richard Giannini announced his retirement in early January 2012. Giannini, 69, a 45-year veteran of athletic administration, has served as the school's athletic director for 13 years. Giannini was officially hired on April 21, 1999; and

WHEREAS, under Giannini's tenure, Southern Miss Athletics has captured 13 Conference USA Championships, including three football titles, two regular season and two tournament crowns in both baseball and softball and one in volleyball and men's basketball. Under his direction the football team enjoyed 13 consecutive winning seasons and 12 bowl appearances. The baseball team played in nine consecutive NCAA Regionals. He had two sports reach the College World Series, including the baseball team that advanced to the event in 2009, and the softball program which were among the final eight, in both the 1999 and 2000 campaigns; and

WHEREAS, in addition, Giannini spearheaded a total makeover of the school's athletic facilities, which included the construction of a new athletics building, the Athletic Center, the South End Zone and East Club suites, an artificial turf and new lighting at Carlisle-Faulkner Field at Roberts Stadium, a new press box and suites as well as an expansion at Pete Taylor Park/Hill Denson Field. New construction also included a new tennis facility as well as a new stadium at the softball field and Reed Green Coliseum which had a makeover which included an

expansion to the men's and women's basketball offices, dressing and meeting rooms. Since 1999, he has overseen over \$68 Million worth of new athletic facilities or renovations to current facilities, including \$50 Million for renovation and expansion projects at Carlisle-Faulkner Field at Roberts Stadium, the home of the football team and Reed Green Coliseum, the home of the men's and women's basketball teams and volleyball squad. A new baseball press box and 12 luxury suites were completed at Pete Taylor Park in 2008 and a baseball seating expansion has just been completed. A golf training facility is in the works for the near future; and

WHEREAS, Giannini founded the Southern Miss Athletic Foundation, which has raised over \$100 Million, including cash and endowments as well as the development of the Circle of Champions program, a group who have each committed \$100,000, and has grown since its inception to over 140 members; and

WHEREAS, during Giannini's tenure, graduation rates of USM student-athletes have been recognized as one of the best in the nation. The APR rate continues to improve with each of the University's 16 athletic programs and baseball has been publicly recognized twice by the NCAA as having a Top 10 percent ranking in APR among Division I programs. Southern Miss has had 17 ESPN *The Magazine Academic All-Americans*, 17 Conference USA Scholar Athletes of the Year, 280 Conference USA Academic Medalists (3.75 GPA or higher) and 1,059 Commissioners Honor Roll (3.0 or higher), including 130 for the 2010-2011 year. The school has won the Halbrook Award 7 consecutive times for the men's department – eighth overall – and once for the women's department during his tenure. The purpose of the Halbrook Award is to recognize colleges and universities in the State of Mississippi that maintain and achieve high academic standards for student athletes, thus encouraging high graduation rates; and

WHEREAS, a tireless and innovative administrator, Giannini brought outstanding intercollegiate athletic experience to Hattiesburg. He came to Southern Miss after working in a similar position at Louisiana-Monroe. While working for the NCAA in the mid-1970s, Giannini's responsibilities included serving as Executive Producer of the ABC Football Highlight Shows, as well as NCAA Tournament basketball games not aired by NBC. He also arranged and produced the first national telecast of the College Baseball World Series for HBO, and produced numerous conference football highlight films. He was also Director of Licensing for the NCAA. He served as Assistant Sports Information Director at Florida (his alma mater) from 1966 to 1970, was Sports Information Director at Duke University from 1970 to 1973, before becoming Assistant Athletics Director at Duke in 1974. After working for the NCAA in 1976 and 1977, Giannini returned to Florida as Senior Associate Athletics Director to oversee external affairs. He left Florida in 1986 to enter the private sector, taking over as CEO and co-owner of Raycom Management Group in Charlotte, North Carolina, a subsidiary of Raycom Sports, where he developed numerous sporting events, including the Blockbuster Bowl, the most successful first-year bowl in NCAA history; and

WHEREAS, he was inducted into the University of Florida's College of Health and Human Performance Hall of Fame in March of 2004 and the Saint Leo University Athletics Hall of Fame in February of 2005. The Golden Eagle Athletics Director was a track athlete, competed in the weight events at St. Leo and Furman; and graduated from the University of Florida in 1966; and

WHEREAS, his knowledge and insight into the world of collegiate athletics has allowed him to serve on several Conference USA Committees and currently is the Chairman of the Football and Scheduling Committees. He was Chairman of the C-USA Athletic Directors' Committee in 2001-2002 and 2008-2009; and

WHEREAS, Giannini and his wife, Gayle, are parents of four daughters: Ansley Stone, Brittney Borbash, Carlyn Linker and DeLancey; and grandparents of Tori, Parker, Sara, Kelsey, Ryleigh, Kyle, Avery, Mackenzie and Landon, and it is with great pride that we note the accomplishments of this effective Athletic Administrator who has changed the face of the University of Southern Mississippi and worked hard over the last 13 years to make it a better program bringing honor to the State of Mississippi:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby recognize and commend the achievements of University of Southern Mississippi Athletic Director Richard Giannini on the occasion of his retirement and extend to him and his family best wishes on their future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to Richard Giannini and the President of University of Southern Mississippi, forwarded to the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning, and made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
April 25, 2012



PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
May 3, 2012



SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES