

HOUSE RESOLUTION 31

By Shaw

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Head Coach Lovie Smith of the Chicago Bears.

WHEREAS, from time to time this General Assembly finds it appropriate to honor and commend those exceptional individuals who have contributed significantly to their profession and their community; and

WHEREAS, one such person is Lovie Smith, head coach of the Chicago Bears, who has guided the National Football League franchise to remarkable success, including, most significantly, an appearance in Super Bowl XLI; and

WHEREAS, on February 4, 2007, Chicago Bears coach Lovie Smith faced Indianapolis Colts coach Tony Dungy in one of professional sports' most prized championships; in an historic matchup, Super Bowl XLI marked the first time two African–American head coaches have led their teams to the Super Bowl; and

WHEREAS, Coach Smith came to Chicago with a reputation for instituting positive change and, since being named head coach of the Chicago Bears in January of 2004, he has honed his reputation for detailed organization and game planning while displaying a strong commitment to winning; and

WHEREAS, Lovie Smith has spent twenty-three years in coaching at the collegiate and professional levels; a native of Big Sandy, Texas, he began his coaching career at his hometown high school, Big Sandy High School, in 1980, before moving to Cascia Hall Prep in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the following year; and

WHEREAS, two years later, Lovie Smith made the jump to the college ranks at his alma mater of Tulsa, where he served as a linebackers coach until 1986; and

WHEREAS, Coach Smith moved on to coach linebackers at Wisconsin in 1987, Arizona State from 1988 to 1991, and Kentucky in 1992, and he served as defensive backs coach at Tennessee from 1993-1994 and Ohio State in 1995; and

WHEREAS, from 1996 to 2000, Lovie Smith coached linebackers at Tampa Bay under Tony Dungy and, from 2001 through 2003, he served as defensive coordinator for the St. Louis Rams, taking on the added responsibility of Assistant Head Coach with the Rams prior to the 2003 season; and

WHEREAS, Coach Smith was named the Associated Press NFL Coach of the Year for 2005 after becoming the fastest head coach in Bears history to lead the team to a division title; his phenomenal success in the 2006 season, culminating in Super Bowl XLI, assures Lovie Smith a prominent place in the annals of professional football history; and

WHEREAS, Lovie Smith has developed into one of the most brilliant coaches in the National Football League, where he is widely respected by players and coaching peers alike; and

WHEREAS, his many achievements aside, Lovie is most proud of the love and support he shares with his wife MaryAnne, and their three sons, Mikal, Matthew, and Miles, and twin grandsons, Malachi and Noah; and

WHEREAS, committed to giving back to his community, Coach Smith devotes much of his time to helping the American Diabetes Association; in addition, he and his wife founded the Lovie Smith and MaryAnne Smith Foundation, which is a scholarship program designed to aid qualified high school students who hail from low socio-economic backgrounds by giving them the ability to afford and attend college; and

WHEREAS, it is most appropriate that we pause in our deliberations to honor one of our Nation's most respected sports figures; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we congratulate Head Coach Lovie Smith of the Chicago Bears for his extraordinary accomplishments on the field and commend his admirable contributions to his community, extending to him our best wishes for every continued success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.