



2023 Senate Joint Resolution 62

ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTION

Relating to: honoring the life and legacy of Ada Deer.

Whereas, Ada Deer, a distinguished public servant and advocate, dedicated her life to the advancement of Indigenous rights and social justice; and

Whereas, Ada Deer was born on August 7, 1935, and, throughout her life, she demonstrated unwavering commitment and dedication to her community and the restoration of tribal sovereignty; and

Whereas, Ada Deer accomplished a lifetime of “firsts,” becoming the first Menominee member to earn an undergraduate degree from the University of Wisconsin–Madison and the first Native American to earn a master’s degree from the Columbia University School of Social Work and, as Director of the UW American Indian Studies Program, creating the first program at UW–Madison to provide social work training on reservations; and

Whereas, Ada Deer became the first woman to lead the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs as the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior from 1993 to 1997, where she worked tirelessly to improve the lives of Indigenous peoples through policy initiatives, advocacy, and outreach; and

Whereas, Ada Deer played a pivotal role in the restoration of federal recognition for the Menominee Tribe, a critical achievement that reaffirmed the sovereign rights and cultural heritage of the Menominee people; and

Whereas, Ada Deer’s accomplishments extended beyond federal policy, as she also served as a social worker, professor, author, and advocate for affordable housing, education, and healthcare for marginalized communities; and

Whereas, Ada Deer’s lifelong dedication to her heritage, activism, and community empowerment has left an indelible mark on the fields of Indigenous rights and public service and earned her the Distinguished Alumni Award—the Wisconsin Alumni Association’s highest honor and most prestigious and enduring award; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring, That the Wisconsin state legislature honors and celebrates the life and legacy of Ada Deer, recognizing her as a trailblazer, leader, and advocate who fought tirelessly for justice, equality, and the betterment of society; and, be it further

Resolved, That that the members of the Wisconsin state legislature extend their deepest condolences to Ada Deer’s family and friends and all those whose lives she touched and commit to continuing her work by promoting the values of inclusivity, social justice, and Indigenous rights that she championed throughout her remarkable life; and, be it further

Resolved, That the senate chief clerk shall share a copy of this resolution with Ada Deer’s family as a testament to her enduring impact on our state and the broader world.

Representative Robin J. Vos
Speaker of the Assembly

Senator Chris Kapenga
President of the Senate

Date

Richard A. Champagne
Acting Senate Chief Clerk