

# State of Wisconsin



## 2021 Assembly Joint Resolution 2

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### ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTION

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**Relating to:** honoring the life and commemorating the career and accomplishments of Hank Aaron.

Whereas, Henry Louis “Hank” Aaron died at the age of 86 on January 22, 2021, in Atlanta, Georgia; and

Whereas, Hank Aaron was a legendary baseball player and a revered civil rights icon who overcame racial barriers to become one of the most accomplished baseball players in history; and

Whereas, Hank Aaron was born on February 5, 1934, in Mobile, Alabama, the third of Herbert and Estella Aaron’s eight children; and

Whereas, at age 14, Hank Aaron, was inspired to play baseball professionally when he heard a speech given in Mobile in 1947 by Jackie Robinson, the first African American to play in the major leagues; and

Whereas, Hank Aaron started playing on semi-professional teams at age 15, and began his professional career in 1952 at age 18 in the Negro League with the Indianapolis Clowns; and

Whereas, after a brief stint with the Indianapolis Clowns, Hank Aaron began his minor league career in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, in June 1952, where he played for the Eau Claire Bears for a season; and

Whereas, during his season with the Eau Claire Bears, Hank Aaron hit nine home runs, had a batting average of .336, made the All-Star team, and was named the Northern League Rookie of the Year; and

Whereas, Hank Aaron made his major league debut in 1954, and spent much of his career playing for the Milwaukee Braves from 1954 until 1966, leading the team to a World Series Championship in 1957 at the age of 23; and

Whereas, Hank Aaron moved with the Braves to Atlanta in 1966, becoming the first Black player on a major league team in the south; and

Whereas, Hank Aaron played his final two seasons with the Milwaukee Brewers before retiring in 1976, and Aaron’s uniform, No. 44, was retired by the Milwaukee Brewers; and

Whereas, of his many accomplishments, Hank Aaron broke Babe Ruth’s all-time home run record on April 8, 1974, with his 715th home run, and set a record of 755 home runs in 1976 that held until 2007; and

Whereas, Hank Aaron was known for his hitting ability, earning the nicknames “Hammer” and “Hammerin’ Hank,” becoming the first player to have 3,000 hits and 500 home runs, and receiving the National League Most Valuable Player award in 1957; and

Whereas, following his retirement, Hank Aaron became one of the first Black executives in baseball when he joined the Atlanta Braves as Vice President of Player Development, and established the Hank Aaron Chasing the Dream Foundation with his wife to help underprivileged children; and

Whereas, Hank Aaron was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1982, the first year he was eligible; and

Whereas, in 1992, Major League Baseball established the Hank Aaron Award, given annually to the top offensive player in each league, to honor his achievements; and

Whereas, in 1994, Hank Aaron visited Eau Claire for the unveiling of a statue of him located outside of Carson Park that depicts Hank as an 18-year-old Eau Claire Bears player; and

Whereas, Hank Aaron was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation’s highest civilian honor, by President George W. Bush in 2002 for overcoming “poverty and racism to become one of the most accomplished baseball players of all time”; and

Whereas, Hank was a loving father and husband and is survived by his wife, Billye Williams, five children, and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren; now, therefore, be it

***Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, That*** the members of the Wisconsin Legislature honor the life and accomplishments of Hank Aaron.

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Senator Chris Kapenga  
President of the Senate

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Representative Robin J. Vos  
Speaker of the Assembly

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Date

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Kay Inabnet  
Acting Assembly Chief Clerk