



2023 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 62

September 8, 2023 - Introduced by Senators AGARD, BALLWEG, CABRAL-GUEVARA, CARPENTER, FELZKOWSKI, HESSELBEIN, L. JOHNSON, PFAFF, ROYS, SMITH, SPREITZER, TAYLOR, WIRCH and LARSON, cosponsored by Representatives NEUBAUER, BALDEH, BARE, J. ANDERSON, CONLEY, CONSIDINE, DOYLE, EMERSON, GOYKE, HONG, C. ANDERSON, JOERS, MOORE OMOKUNDE, ORTIZ-VELEZ, RATCLIFF, SINICKI, SNODGRASS, STUBBS, SUBECK, CLANCY and PALMERI. Referred to Committee on Senate Organization.

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

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

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

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

13 Whereas, Ada Deer became the first woman to lead the federal Bureau of Indian
14 Affairs as the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior from 1993

1 to 1997, where she worked tirelessly to improve the lives of Indigenous peoples
2 through policy initiatives, advocacy, and outreach; and

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

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

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

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

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

