

Resolution No. 2020-18 of the Board of Commissioners of
La Porte County, Indiana honoring the late Governor Joe Kernan

WHEREAS, Joe Kernan graduated from St. Joseph's High School in South Bend, Indiana before entering the University of Notre Dame where he graduated in 1968 after serving as starting catcher on the Notre Dame baseball team, and

WHEREAS, Joe Kernan entered the U.S. Navy in 1969 and served as a Naval Flight Officer aboard the U.S.S. *Kitty Hawk* where he performed multiple reconnaissance missions over North Vietnam until his plane was shot down and he was held as a prisoner of war in the infamous "Hanoi Hilton" for nearly eleven months, and

WHEREAS, he received numerous awards including the Navy Commendation Medal, two Purple Hearts and the Distinguished Flying Cross, and

WHEREAS, after completing his Naval service, Joe Kernan returned to South Bend and worked in the private sector until he became South Bend's city controller from 1980 to 1984, and

WHEREAS, he was elected Mayor of South Bend in 1987, 1991 and again in 1995 when he won with more than 82% of the vote, and

WHEREAS, Joe Kernan was elected Lt. Governor serving under Gov. Frank O'Bannon in 1996 and they were re-elected together in 2000, and

WHEREAS, he assumed the position of Governor on the untimely death of Gov. O'Bannon in September of 2003 and

WHEREAS, countless Hoosiers benefited by his many contributions in public life and his greatest achievement was his skillful ability to set aside partisan politics to bring both sides together to improve the quality of life of all Hoosiers.

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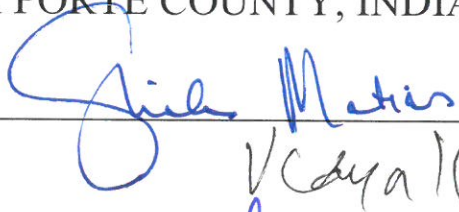
WHEREAS, one of his successors as Mayor of South Bend, Pete Buttigieg put it well when he wrote, “There will not be another like Joe Kernan. South Bend will always be proud of his heroism in uniform and his leadership as our Mayor and Governor. And his friends will always remember his exuberant joy, his compassion for the vulnerable, his ready smile and his inimitable laugh,” and

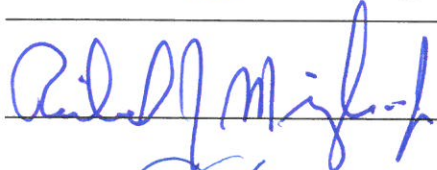
WHEREAS, Governor Eric Holcomb set forth an equally fitting tribute when he wrote, “Distinguished isn’t a strong enough word to describe him. Without regard for personal cost, Joe Kernan devoted every ounce of his life, time and again, to upholding the oath he took, and serving the country and state he loved, Indiana.”

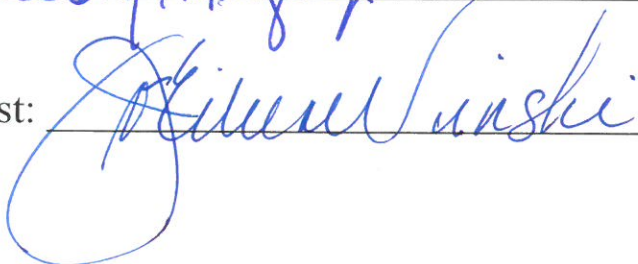
NOW THEREFORE, the Board of County Commissioners of La Porte County wishes to permanently recognize and memorialize the sense of duty, commitment, and self-sacrifice that characterized Joe Kernan’s time in public life. Our state’s 48th governor was a genuine public servant who truly understood what service meant and his legacy will live on in all those he inspired.

All of which is resolved this 5th day of August, 2020

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF LA PORTE COUNTY, INDIANA





Attest: 

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