Approved by the Board of Trustees

November 16, 2023

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Board Meeting

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# RESOLUTION FOR THOMAS R. BEARROWS

For more than 26 years, you have served the University of Illinois with knowledge, dedication, passion and integrity. Assuming the role of university counsel in 1997, your legacy of service is exemplary. You have been the longest-serving counsel in the history of the University of Illinois System.

You have served alongside 49 trustees, 70 student trustees, 11 board chairs, six university presidents, and five board secretaries. With the utmost respect, discretion, and diligence, you performed a staggering number of tasks, many of which will never be widely known given the confidential nature of your duty and mission. With the University as your primary client, you have done what was best for the institution at every turn. You are regarded as the most respected higher education legal expert in the State of Illinois, often called upon to provide guidance and training for trustees around the state.

As an officer of the Board of Trustees, you have counseled the Board on numerous topics, provided briefs on individual cases, and ensured legal protocols were followed. Your knowledge, understanding, and willingness to guide others on the Open Meetings Act is unprecedented. Your thoroughness and in-depth research guide the legal advice you provide. You have been the voice of reason and honesty, the essential wise and measured counsel, when it has been most needed.

You offered guidance in both stable and challenging periods in the University’s history, working always to protect our beloved institution. Over the past quarter century, updated requirements for trustee training and revisions to statutes and rules required changes in process and documentation that were achieved thanks to your relentless oversight and dedication. You were the institution’s expert advocate through numerous Article X processes and medical malpractice proceedings. During times of leadership transitions, you have counseled the Board and the System to return to normal operations with ease.

The COVID-19 Pandemic presented uniquely challenging circumstances, necessitating varied approaches in complying with rapidly evolving legal requirements and public health needs in a timely and nimble manner. Your guidance to the Secretary of the Board on executive orders and State requirements made it possible for the business of the Board to continue uninterrupted. Your leadership and the commitment you inspire in your team supported ground-breaking initiatives like the formation of Shield T3 as a University-related Organization to deliver saliva testing to the broader community, saving countless lives.

You spent a quarter-century overseeing the management of the legal offices for all three universities. As a leader, you have built, developed, and mentored a team of attorneys with expertise in the vast spectrum of topics relevant to the universities and the System. You will leave behind a team of legal professionals who were initially hired with your oversight and benefitted from your expertise and length of tenure.

As an undergraduate and juris doctorate alumnus of the University of Illinois, you brought loyalty to your alma mater. You also served with distinction as legal counsel to the alumni association and, for several years, the University of Illinois Foundation.

The Board wishes to express its deepest gratitude for your service to the University of Illinois System. At this time, the Board of Trustees, President Timothy L. Killeen, faculty, students, and staff members extend warm wishes to you, Holly, and your family, especially Brett and Harry, for your loyalty to the University of Illinois System.

The Board of Trustees directs that this resolution be incorporated in the minutes of today’s meeting to become a part of the official public record, and that a suitable copy be given to you as a permanent reminder of the esteem and affection in which you are held.