

Legislation Text

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Honoring the 135th Anniversary of *The Daily Pennsylvanian*, the award-winning student newspaper of the University of Pennsylvania, and the retirement of its general manager, Eric Jacobs, who guided the newspaper with diligence and foresight through the past four decades.

WHEREAS, *The Daily Pennsylvanian*, often referred to as “*The DP*” printed its first edition in 1885 and is celebrating its 135th Anniversary as one of the nation’s leading campus voices in print, online, and social media; and

WHEREAS, Eric Jacobs began his association with *The DP* in 1976 as a student reporter covering University news topics like student politics, campus security, and the dining service. His excellence as a student journalist ultimately led to his selection as managing editor. There his talent for technology set the course for the newspaper’s future - as well as his own; and

WHEREAS, In 1980, as student managing director, Eric led *The DP*’s transition from an old-fashioned typeset to a new computer system enabling reporters and editors to create and edit all articles and advertisements electronically. Under Eric’s leadership, *The DP* became one of the first college dailies to adopt the new tools of desktop publishing; and

WHEREAS, After graduation, Eric became a full-time employee of *The DP* and served as the organization’s general manager since 1981, charged with overseeing its technology and business operations. In the early 1980s, Eric also helped oversee *The DP*’s establishment as an independent non-profit corporation legally separate from the University, with students serving as its officers. Today, *The DP* is one of the few college dailies in the nation to remain financially and editorially independent, a fact which University officials admit they regard “with terror” ; and

WHEREAS, Eric has provided a calming voice to each new group of enthusiastic, yet inexperienced, 20-year-olds who joined the newspaper. Through the decades, Eric guided the students and professional staff to create a financially strong, technology-adept organization that delivered excellent, award-winning student journalism. Long hours at the office - made longer by his willingness to spend time mentoring students - are a hallmark of Eric’s leadership; and

WHEREAS, *The DP* has earned countless college media awards for both editorial and business excellence from the Associated College Press (ACP) and College Media Business and Advertising Managers (CMBAM), the two most prestigious organizations in college media - a mark of *The DP*’s success on “both sides of the ball.” Many of these awards have resulted from muckraking investigations that *The DP* staffers cherish and University officials fear - but that have always moved the University community forward; and

WHEREAS, Eric has been a leader among college newspaper professionals, serving as a top officer of college newspaper associations and was nationally recognized with the first-ever CMBAM Distinguished Service Award in 1997 for his “contributions to college advertising/business education” and service as a “role model and mentor for both students and colleagues;” and

WHEREAS, Eric's steady leadership, strategic business acumen, and unwavering belief in the power of young people to change the world have enabled *The DP* to launch thousands of successful alumni into careers in business, the professions, public service, the arts, and especially the media. Penn alumni, who learned to love writing and reporting at *The DP*, forged paths as editors of top magazines, Pulitzer Prize winners, best-selling authors, network broadcasters, and digital media savants. Eric has managed a range of programs that positioned *The DP* alumni to provide professional guidance and financial support to the organization; and

WHEREAS, Over the years, even as print media and journalism has struggled with consolidation, truthiness, declines in advertising, and the transition from print to digital, Eric has worked with alumni, students, and staff to preserve the organization's financial stability and to spearhead the organization's 21st-Century strategy; and

WHEREAS, In a world in which freedom of the press struggles to survive not only as a business, but as a constitutional necessity essential to democracy, Eric's role as a business manager for *The DP* was always to inspire a team of students to create and distribute excellent journalism that empowered the public. As Eric once said: "There needs to be the vision, infrastructure and staff to create enough content - relevant content, good content - plus good social media and marketing strategies, to ensure that people in the community will find and read what is being published, whether online or in print. Even though finding viable business models is a challenging proposition for every legacy publication, from large metro dailies to small college newspapers, the key in my mind is ensuring that we have an engaged audience; with that, I'm confident *The Daily Pennsylvanian* can move forward successfully" ; and

WHEREAS, As Eric is now planning to wind-down his day-to-day management at *The DP*, his legacy lives on in his unrivaled contributions to the paper as it commemorates its 135 years of service to the University community; and

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Honors the 135th Anniversary of *The Daily Pennsylvanian*, the award-winning student newspaper of the University of Pennsylvania, and the retirement of its general manager Eric Jacobs, who guided the newspaper with diligence and foresight through the past four decades.