

1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, April 1 is a historic day for Black Chicagoans;
3 on April 1, 1963, WVON, "The Voice of the Negro", began
4 broadcasting as the first full-service, Black-oriented music
5 station in Chicago; on April 1, 2003, not only will the
6 station celebrate 40 years of serving Chicago's Black
7 community, but the Supreme Court will make a decision on
8 Affirmative Action; this decision will affect all non-White
9 people in America; and

10 WHEREAS, Originating from the acquisition of WHFC, a
11 1,000-watt station licensed to Cicero by Leonard and Phil
12 Chess, WVON began broadcasting with a group of handpicked
13 radio personalities that included Franklin McCarthy, E.
14 Rodney Jones, Herb Kent, Wesley South, and Pervis Spann; they
15 became known as the "Good Guys" and eventually added to their
16 roster Ric Ricardo, Bill "Butterball" Crane, Ed Cook, Joe
17 Cobb, Roy Wood, Ed Maloney, Bill "Doc" Lee, Don Cornelius,
18 Richard Pegue, Isabel Joseph Johnson, Cecil Hale, and McKey
19 Fitzhugh; and

20 WHEREAS, Under the direction of the station's general
21 manager, Lucky Cordell, and its "Ambassador of Goodwill",
22 Bernadine C. Washington, the Good Guys held Black Chicago
23 captive for more than a decade and ranked consistently among
24 the top three stations in the Chicago radio market; and

25 WHEREAS, Bernadine Washington was the vice-president and
26 general manager of WVON in the 1960s; in an era where women
27 were just beginning to be accepted in the workplace and Black
28 women had an even tougher time, Ms. Washington personified
29 class and style and was a businesswoman to emulate; and

30 WHEREAS, During a time when Blacks were actively involved
31 in the Civil Rights Movement, WVON was the voice of
32 information for local and national affairs; in addition, the

1 Good Guys were involved in numerous activities in a variety
2 of areas throughout Chicago; the annual basketball game "The
3 Good Guys vs. the Harlem Globetrotters" drew tens of
4 thousands to the Chicago Stadium and the International
5 Amphitheater and all proceeds raised went to charity; every
6 year, the Good Guys participated in a holiday distribution of
7 1,000 turkeys; and

8 WHEREAS, Many prominent people were featured on WVON,
9 including Elijah Muhammad, Robert Kennedy, Dr. Martin Luther
10 King, Jr., Maclom X, Roy Wilkins, Whitney Young, Jackie
11 Robinson, Duke Ellington, Jimmy Carter, and Dick Gregory;
12 during the days of Operation Breadbasket, Rev. Jesse Jackson,
13 Sr. had a regular spot on Friday nights; when Medgar Evers
14 was killed on June 11, 1963, Wesley South's show "Hotline"
15 received 50,000 calls and the circuits were jammed,
16 preventing dialing out in the area; this massive audience
17 response led to the creation of designated lines for radio
18 broadcasters; and

19 WHEREAS, Through a series of events, changes in
20 ownership, and frequency changes, WVON was purchased by
21 members of the Good Guys, Pervis Spann and Wesley South; in
22 1986, the format of WVON was changed to mostly talk; and

23 WHEREAS, Today, WVON continues to provide a platform for
24 Black Chicago to air its concerns, express its differences,
25 and discuss issues that affect society; it is the voice of
26 Black people in Chicago; the personalities of WVON are Sharon
27 McGhee, Cliff Kelley, Perri Small, Monique Caradine,
28 Professor Willie Dixon, and original Good Guys, Pervis Spann
29 and Herb Kent; keeping the memory of Bernadine Washington
30 alive is Melody Spann-Cooper, who serves as the president and
31 general manager of WVON; therefore, be it

32 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE

1 NINETY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
2 we congratulate WVON on the occasion of its 40th anniversary
3 of being the voice for Black Chicago, and we commend the
4 station for its work to inform, educate, and provide a forum
5 for Black Chicago; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
7 presented to WVON as a token of our respect and esteem and
8 with sincere wishes for its continued success.