



1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the House of Representatives of the
3 State of Illinois learned with sadness of the death of Dr.
4 Ronald Singer, the Robert R. Bensley Professor of Organismal
5 Biology and Anatomy at the University of Chicago, on Monday,
6 April 17, 2006; and

7 WHEREAS, Dr. Singer was born in 1924 in Cape Town, South
8 Africa; he was educated in South Africa, where he also made his
9 first major archeological find, the Saldanha skull, dating back
10 hundreds of thousands of years; as a young man, he loved
11 playing rugby and was nicknamed "The Rhino"; and

12 WHEREAS, He attended the University of Cape Town, where he
13 earned a medical degree in 1947, a doctorate in 1962, and met
14 his wife, Shirley; and

15 WHEREAS, The couple eventually chose to leave South Africa
16 because they were opposed to apartheid; Dr. Singer had been
17 called on by the government to testify on race classification
18 so that descending levels of rights could be assigned to
19 people, and he refused; his wife was a member of Black Sash, a
20 group of white women who showed their political protest and
21 mourning by wearing dark clothes during marches; and

22 WHEREAS, He left South Africa with his family in 1962, when
23 he became a professor of anatomy and anthropology at the
24 University of Chicago; three years later, he became chair of
25 the anatomy department, a post he held until 1977; and

26 WHEREAS, As a professor, he was known to use his wit to
27 make a dry subject interesting; he also emphasized honesty and
28 non-compromising integrity; he was humble and down to earth,
29 and students felt comfortable approaching him; and

1 WHEREAS, He helped to shift the discipline of anatomy away
2 from just the memorization of organs, bones, and tendons to a
3 more dynamic study of the entire organism's biology; the focus
4 changed to what the anatomical pieces are doing for the human
5 body; and

6 WHEREAS, Dr. Singer was also a world-renowned researcher
7 with more than 140 publications to his credit; in 2001, he
8 finished the Encyclopedia of Paleontology, a two-volume set
9 published to critical acclaim; his academic work also included
10 studies of indigenous African peoples; and

11 WHEREAS, During the Vietnam War, Dr. Singer helped the U.S.
12 Department of Defense design a bulletproof vest for helicopter
13 pilots; in the 1970s, the Japanese government wanted his advice
14 on designing dissection tables; and

15 WHEREAS, He is credited with organizing archeological digs
16 in South Africa and England that helped fill in gaps in the
17 understanding of early humans; finds on the digs allowed
18 researchers to see the changes in human physical appearance and
19 the changes in human behavior over a very long period of time;
20 and

21 WHEREAS, The passing of Dr. Ronald Singer has been deeply
22 felt by many, especially his wife of 55 years, Shirley Singer;
23 his sons, Eric Singer and Charles Singer; his daughters, Hazel
24 Singer and Sonia Nyberg; his brother, Martin Singer; and his
25 four grandchildren; therefore, be it

26 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
27 NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
28 we mourn the passing of Dr. Ronald Singer, and we extend our
29 deepest sympathy to his family, friends, and all who knew and
30 loved him; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
2 presented to his family as an expression of our sincerest
3 condolences.