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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2           WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of  
3 Representatives are pleased to honor Eugene Redmond on his  
4 seventieth birthday, December 1, 2007; and

5           WHEREAS, Eugene Redmond was born December 1, 1937 in St.  
6 Louis, Missouri; he was orphaned at age nine and was raised by  
7 his grandmother and "neighborhood fathers," made up of members  
8 of the Seventh Day Adventist Church and friends of his older  
9 brother; during high school he worked on the newspaper and  
10 yearbook, performed in school and church plays, and composed  
11 for neighborhood singing groups; and

12           WHEREAS, From 1958 to 1961 Eugene Redmond served as a U.S.  
13 Marine in the Far East, acquiring a speaking knowledge of  
14 Japanese; he was an associate editor of the East St. Louis  
15 Beacon from 1961 to 1962; in 1963 Redmond co-founded a weekly  
16 paper in East St. Louis, the Monitor, working at different  
17 times as a contributing editor, executive editor, and editorial  
18 page editor; at Southern Illinois University he was the first  
19 African-American student editor of the university newspaper;  
20 after receiving his bachelor's degree in English literature in  
21 1964, he earned a master's degree in English literature from  
22 Washington University in 1966; and

1           WHEREAS, In 1965, while still in graduate school, he won  
2 first prize in the Washington University Annual Festival of the  
3 Arts for his poem "Eye in the Ceiling"; in 1968 he published  
4 his first volume of poetry, A Tale of Two Toms, or Tom-Tom  
5 (Uncle Toms of East St. Louis and St. Louis); he has been  
6 poet-in-residence at Oberlin College, California State  
7 University, the University of Wisconsin, and Wayne State; and

8           WHEREAS, From 1967 to 1969 he was a senior consultant to  
9 Katherine Dunham at Southern University's Performing Arts  
10 Training Center, where he acted, directed, wrote plays, and  
11 supervised the drama and writing departments; twelve of his  
12 plays, ballets, and choral dramas have been produced on  
13 university campuses and on California television; and

14           WHEREAS, Eugene Redmond has been a professor at Southern  
15 Illinois University since 1990; he also works in the public  
16 schools and has established a feeder system, following some  
17 writers from elementary school through high school as a way of  
18 bringing "literacy to the many and the literary to the few";  
19 his other community activities include organizing the annual  
20 "Break Word with the World" event in East St. Louis, a  
21 month-long "mock trial of the media" culminating in a reading  
22 and publication; and

23           WHEREAS, He has received wide recognition as a poet and

1 teacher; in 1976 he became poet laureate of East St. Louis, the  
2 first poet laureate named by a municipality; he was awarded a  
3 National Endowment for the Arts creative writing fellowship in  
4 1978; the Eugene B. Redmond Writers Club was founded in 1986,  
5 with writers such as Maya Angelou and Amiri Baraka on the board  
6 of directors; Eye on the Ceiling won an American Book Award in  
7 1991; in 1993 Pan-African Movement USA awarded him a Pyramid  
8 Award for lifetime contributions to Pan-Africanism through  
9 poetry; and he received a "Tribute to an Elder" award from  
10 African Poetry Theater in 1995; therefore, be it

11 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
12 NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we  
13 congratulate Eugene Redmond for his many contributions to  
14 society and culture and wish him a happy birthday; and be it  
15 further

16 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
17 presented to Eugene Redmond as a symbol of our respect.