



HR1516

LRB095 22189 KXB 52786 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives are pleased to honor Phyllis Wilken on her 95th birthday; and

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WHEREAS, Phyllis Wilken was born September 8, 1913 to Fredrick and Ida Schmitz Lauerman of Alexandria, Minnesota; on July 23, 1936 she married Eibe Switters Wilken; Phyllis Wilken received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Home Economics from the University of Wisconsin; she was a charter member of Phi Upsilon Omicron, Tau Chapter, National Honorary Home Economics Fraternity, and in 1933 was a charter member of Gamma Sigma Chapter of Alpha Phi Sorority; and

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WHEREAS, Her teaching career began in Neenah, Wisconsin and later continued in the Milwaukee Public Schools and Milwaukee Vocational Schools; after moving to Illinois she taught at Crescent Iroquois High School and then in the Kankakee School District at East Ridge Junior High School, East Ridge High School, and developed the Westview High School Home Economics Department; she organized and taught the first adult vocational education classes in foods and clothing; she supervised student teachers and in her last five years served as the Work Study Coordinator for Foods and Health Services; while as advisor for the Future Homemakers of America, both in Crescent City and

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1 Kankakee, her clubs received first place in the State for three
2 years and received numerous club awards; she was honored at
3 FHA's national convention in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, where
4 she also provided one of her award winning students as the
5 key-note speaker; after over 21 years of service she retired in
6 1976; and

7 WHEREAS, The family's early years included travels and
8 brief moves to California, Colorado and Arizona; before moving
9 to Kankakee in 1956 she lived 17 years in Iroquois County on
10 farms at Woodworth and Crescent City; she served on boards of
11 the Milford Women's Club, Iroquois County Home Extension, and
12 was past president of the Ash Grove Unit and a 4-H leader; she
13 taught Sunday school for 13 years at the Watseka United
14 Methodist Church; she taught for 2 1/2 years at Crescent City
15 High School; she is remembered for her outstanding programs,
16 festivals, and proms; and she served as a judge for many events
17 in her lifetime, both in Iroquois and Kankakee counties; and

18 WHEREAS, She was an active member of the Illinois
19 Federation of Women's Clubs for 40 years; she served on the
20 General Federation of Woman's Club of Kankakee Board and the
21 District 8 Woman's Club Board for over 20 years; she promoted
22 State and local projects and held numerous chairmanships; as
23 Public Affairs Chairman she conducted a countywide national
24 anti-shoplifting survey and organized four countywide Crime

1 Reduction Forums; she chaired the first area Neighborhood Watch
2 programs, introducing McGruff the Crime Dog; she developed an
3 Anti-Crime Reduction Coalition (later known as Crime Stoppers)
4 enlisting help from the Exchange Club; she gave numerous
5 programs and conducted contests in area schools on crime
6 prevention; the Kankakee Women's Club received a national award
7 presented by Jim Edgar, then Attorney General, given at the
8 Cedar Rapids Iowa National Women's Club convention because of
9 her work; she was also instrumental in developing the first
10 Domestic Violence Shelter (now Harbor House) and gaining
11 support for this cause; and

12 WHEREAS, Phyllis has had numerous recognition extended to
13 her: the Congressional Medal of Merit Award in 1982 by
14 Congressman George O'Brien (17th District) for outstanding
15 community service; nominated for the Kankakee Volunteer of the
16 Year award; and named Volunteer of the Year in the Arts
17 Division by the Junior League Recognition Program in 1990; she
18 received the Illinois Law Enforcement Officer's Merit Award for
19 Crime Reduction programs; as a result of this recognition the
20 Illinois Law Enforcement convention was held for the first time
21 in Kankakee; in addition, she was honored by the Morris Chamber
22 of Commerce and Grundy County Women's Club for contributions
23 made in crime reduction; and

24 WHEREAS, She was responsible for the development of the

1 Very Special Arts Festivals for persons with disabilities; she
2 enlisted in cooperation with the Kankakee park District and
3 over 20 organizations provided assistance; she organized three
4 festivals and later organized the Kankakee County Very Special
5 Arts Alliance involving various community groups; a national
6 recognition award was received by the General Federation of
7 Women's Clubs of Kankakee for her efforts; and

8 WHEREAS, She is credited and honored by Olivet Nazarene
9 University for bringing the only 1986 bicentennial celebration
10 to Kankakee County; the Historic American Legacy Art exhibit by
11 artist Kay Smith was held on the campus of Olivet Nazarene
12 University; this exhibit was attended by over 8,000
13 individuals; later, she worked to get the State of Illinois to
14 commission a collection of Illinois historic paintings by Kay
15 Smith; Governor Jim Thompson held a State reception to honor
16 both the artist and Phyllis Wilken; and

17 WHEREAS, Her many involvements include charter membership
18 and past president of the Kankakee County Home Economics
19 Association; past president of the Tuesday Book Review; past
20 president of the Kankakee Retired Teachers Association; past
21 chairperson of the Asbury Methodist Church Downy Circle, and
22 past president of the Sigma Kappa Sorority Mother's Club,
23 University of Illinois; Board Affiliations have included the
24 American Association of University Women, Kankakee District

1 111 Vocational Advisory Board, Very Special Arts Alliance,
2 Kankakee Farm Bureau Women's Committee, and Charter member of
3 the Kankakee Valley Garden Club, Community Arts Council, Church
4 Women United, Asbury United Methodist Church Board, and Asbury
5 United Methodist Women Board; and

6 WHEREAS, Other memberships include the Domestic Violence
7 Coalition, Kankakee Historical Society, OPTIONS, Farm Bureau,
8 Farmland Trust Association, and Illinois Retired teachers
9 Association; and

10 WHEREAS, In 1991 she received a recognition award from
11 Secretary of State George Ryan for her community contributions;
12 in 1993 Illinois Speaker of the House Michael Madigan presented
13 her with a resolution for community service and contributions
14 to the State of Illinois for 20 years of service; a tree was
15 planted in the civic center park recognizing her years of
16 community service to the Women's Club of Kankakee; and

17 WHEREAS, Other recognition include awards from the
18 Domestic Violence Coalition, and honored guest at two
19 governor's receptions for work in the arts; in 1999 she was
20 responsible for the planting of a red maple tree and program on
21 the Courthouse lawn celebrating the 100th year of the Kankakee
22 Women's Club; and

1 WHEREAS, She has traveled extensively throughout the
2 United States, Europe, China, Korea, Indonesia, and the Far
3 East; she was one of the first five tour groups to visit remote
4 Sebu, Borneo; and she has hosted many persons from Germany,
5 Taiwan, Korea, and Vietnam in her home; therefore, be it

6 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
7 NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
8 congratulate this remarkable woman, Phyllis Wilken, on the
9 occasion of her 95th birthday and wish her the best on this
10 great day; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
12 presented to Phyllis Wilken as a symbolic part of this
13 celebration.