



HR0666

LRB096 14769 GRL 29852 r

1

HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives are pleased to recognize the 80th anniversary
4 of the Egyptian Theatre in DeKalb on December 10, 2009; and

5 WHEREAS, The rich history of the Egyptian Theatre began in
6 the 1920s, during a period of great prosperity for the people
7 of DeKalb; the City's new-found affluence from the invention
8 and manufacturing of barbed wire fencing made the creation of a
9 vaudeville theatre and movie house possible; and

10 WHEREAS, In response to great public demand, the
11 architectural firm of Rapp & Rapp, one of the premier and
12 prolific theatre design firms in the nation, was chosen to
13 design the Egyptian Theatre; the firm selected an Egyptian
14 theme to commemorate the discovery of King Tut's tomb; site
15 acquisition was then completed by the DeKalb Theatre Company,
16 which awarded the construction contracts to Guldbek and
17 Eckstrom in 1928; and

18 WHEREAS, The theatre opened on December 10, 1929, despite
19 the crash of the stock market just six weeks before; as the
20 Great Depression grew deeper in the 1930s, the demand for
21 movies increased and vaudeville shows faded away; the mighty
22 Wurlitzer organ, manufactured in DeKalb, played for daily

1 shows; and

2 WHEREAS, By the late 1970s, the Egyptian Theatre fell into
3 disrepair, with holes in the roof, flooded dressing rooms, and
4 ruined murals and ornaments; the theatre was on the verge of
5 being demolished; and

6 WHEREAS, In response to the potential loss of this classic
7 DeKalb fixture, The Preservation of the Egyptian Theatre
8 (P.E.T.) was formed on March 1, 1978; the theatre was placed on
9 the National Register of Historic Places by the United States
10 Department of the Interior on December 1, 1978; a major theatre
11 renovation followed and was completed in 1983, opening with the
12 world premiere of G. Gordon Liddy's "Will", which was filmed in
13 the DeKalb and Sycamore area; and

14 WHEREAS, In December of 2007, the Egyptian Theatre was
15 named one of 150 important Illinois architectural sites by the
16 American Institute of Architects; and

17 WHEREAS, The Egyptian Theatre has welcomed many
18 personalities throughout its 80 years of existence, including
19 Jerry Colonna, Lawrence Welk, Ray Charles, George Winston,
20 Muddy Waters, B.B. King, Dizzy Gillespie, Ramsey Lewis, Wynton
21 and Branford Marsalis, Stan Getz, Woody Herman, Jay Leno, and
22 John Astin; on October 25, 1959, John F. Kennedy, then a

1 candidate for U.S. President, made a campaign stop at the
2 theatre during a 3-day tour of Illinois; and

3 WHEREAS, Today, the Egyptian Theatre is the home of many
4 local performing groups and hosts many private parties and
5 celebrations; even in the age of the multiplex theatre, the
6 Egyptian still shows movies on its single 35-foot movie screen,
7 the largest in DeKalb County; and

8 WHEREAS, The Egyptian Theatre's iconic architecture and
9 world-class entertainment are significant contributions to the
10 rich culture and history of the City of DeKalb and the State of
11 Illinois; therefore, be it

12 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
13 NINETY-SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
14 congratulate the members, volunteers, and patrons of The
15 Preservation of the Egyptian Theatre on the occasion of the
16 theatre's 80th anniversary and wish them continued success in
17 preserving this historic icon for the enjoyment of present and
18 future generations; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
20 presented to the P.E.T. Board of Directors as a symbol of our
21 esteem and respect.