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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate are saddened to learn of the death of Fred E. Koehler, founder of Lynfred Winery, of Roselle, who passed away on July 16, 2011; and

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WHEREAS, In the 1920s, his grandfather and father made wine for the family and local politicians; in 1975, Fred and his late wife Lynn made their first batch of wine in the basement of their home; in 1979, what began as a hobby that got out of hand led to the opening of the first winery in Illinois with 7 varieties and 5,000 gallons of wine; and

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WHEREAS, He had to overcome many obstacles along the journey, like converting a residence into a commercial business, convincing California vineyards to ship their grapes 2,000 miles to Illinois, and fighting to get Illinois laws changed to allow more freedom in producing various varieties and larger quantities; in 1985, his big break came when his 1983 Chardonnay earned national recognition by winning 'Best of Class and Best of Show' against other prestigious California wineries in a Reno, Nevada judging; one month later, the wine made history by winning Double Gold at the National Restaurant Show in Chicago; and

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WHEREAS, Former Illinois Governor Jim Thompson, the mayor

1 of Roselle, and State representative Kay Wojcik initiated the
2 groundbreaking of the new Lynfred Winery in 1990; the new
3 winery allowed Koehler's wine production to increase to almost
4 100,000 gallons a year and more than 80 varietals; and

5 WHEREAS, As the winery continued to grow, Fred acquired a
6 world-class winemaker from Chile to take over the winemaking so
7 that he could run the business; during this time he was
8 instrumental in the political workings of the emerging Illinois
9 wine industry; and

10 WHEREAS, In 1999, he opened Tasting deVine (a Lynfred
11 Winery satellite store) in Wheaton, followed by a luxurious bed
12 and breakfast at the Roselle location in 2002; Tasting deVine
13 Cellars was opened in Naperville in 2004; a new Lynfred Winery
14 tasting room in Wheeling followed in 2008; and

15 WHEREAS, He started his career in the restaurant business
16 when he managed Richard's Drive-In on West 95th Street in
17 Chicago; he ventured into managing country clubs, including
18 Elmhurst Country Club and Itasca Country Club; Lynfred Winery
19 began while he was still working at Itasca Country Club; and

20 WHEREAS, He was preceded in death by his first wife, Lynn;
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1 WHEREAS, Fred Koehler is survived by his wife (and biggest
2 fan), Valerie Koehler; his children, Fred Koehler, Jr. and
3 Diane Koehler; his granddaughter, Katura Brooke Schramer; his
4 brother, Arthur Koehler; his stepchildren; Karen, David, and
5 Colin; his 10 grandchildren; his 6 great-grandchildren; and a
6 congregation of wine lovers; therefore, be it

7 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-SEVENTH GENERAL
8 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn, along with
9 his family and friends, the passing of Fred Koehler; and be it
10 further

11 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
12 presented to the family of Fred Koehler as a symbol of our
13 sincere sympathy.