



HR0056

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives wish to recognize Fred "The Hammer" Williamson on his career achievements and impact on American culture and cinema; and

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WHEREAS, Fred Williamson, a native son of Chicago, is an acclaimed African American actor, filmmaker, and former professional football player who has paved the way as a cinematic pioneer and champion of Black culture for over five decades; and

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WHEREAS, Fred Williamson, born in Gary, Indiana on March 5, 1938, initially gained fame as a defensive back in the NFL during the 1960s, during which he earned his moniker, "The Hammer", for his fierce tackling style on the field while playing for the Oakland Raiders, the Pittsburgh Steelers, and the Kansas City Chiefs; and

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WHEREAS, Transitioning from sports to entertainment in the late 1960s, Fred Williamson made an indelible mark on the film industry; he rose to prominence during the Blaxploitation era, starring in a number of iconic films, including Black Caesar in 1973, Hell Up in Harlem in 1973, and Three the Hard Way in 1974; his commanding presence, rugged charm, and strong sense

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1 of justice on-screen made him a symbol of empowerment for
2 African Americans during a pivotal time in cinematic history;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, As a filmmaker, Fred Williamson broke barriers by
5 producing and directing his projects, ensuring greater
6 representation and control over Black narratives in Hollywood;
7 his production company, Po' Boy Productions, allowed him to
8 helm such films, including Mean Johnny Barrows in 1976 and One
9 Down, Two to Go in 1982; through these ventures, he
10 demonstrated an ability to create action-packed stories
11 infused with cultural relevance and personal agency; and

12 WHEREAS, Over his prolific career, Fred Williamson has
13 appeared in more than 100 films, ranging from action thrillers
14 to comedies and dramas; beyond Blaxploitation, his notable
15 roles include appearances in From Dusk Till Dawn in 1996 and
16 Starsky & Hutch in 2004, showcasing his adaptability and
17 enduring appeal; and

18 WHEREAS, Fred Williamson remains a trailblazer who
19 reshaped Hollywood's landscape, leaving a legacy of
20 empowerment, independence, and excellence; as an actor,
21 filmmaker, and cultural icon, he continues to inspire
22 generations with his artistry and entrepreneurial spirit; and

1 WHEREAS, Fred Williamson's extraordinary career and
2 enduring contributions to culture and cinema will be honored
3 with a Legacy Tribute celebration at South Suburban College in
4 Chicago on February 22, 2025; therefore, be it

5 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
6 HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
7 we recognize Fred "The Hammer" Williamson on his extraordinary
8 career and contributions to American culture and cinema; and
9 be it further

10 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
11 presented to Fred Williamson as an expression of our esteem
12 and respect.