



HR0231

LRB104 13033 LAW 24826 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives are saddened to learn of the death of Mildred
4 Austin Kenerson of Chicago, who passed away on March 23, 2025;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, Mildred Kenerson was born to Eddie Lee Perkins
7 and Idella Harper Perkins in Braxton, Mississippi on April 19,
8 1919; she was educated at a Rosenwald School for Negro
9 Children and the Piney Woods Country Life School in Piney
10 Woods, Mississippi; while attending Jackson State College,
11 known today as Jackson State University, she obtained her
12 teaching certificate to educate the students in segregated
13 Simpson County, Mississippi; and

14 WHEREAS, Mildred Kenerson relocated to Troy, New York in
15 1943, and she worked at the Watervliet Arsenal located in Troy
16 during World War II; while there, she was also a member of the
17 Troy branch of the NAACP; she married the late Rowland Elgin
18 Austin in 1948, and they had two children, Rowland Austin and
19 Carolyn Austin; she and her children relocated to Chicago to
20 join her sisters, Monteval Magee, Wilma Perkins, and Mary Lee
21 Stapleton, in 1958; she later married John Dubois "J.D."
22 Kenerson in 1963, and he preceded her in death on November 22,
23 1983; and

1 WHEREAS, Mildred Kenerson was an employee of the Chicago
2 Public Schools; she worked at the Daniel Webster Elementary
3 School on Arthington Street from 1969 to 1999, where she
4 performed various duties, including teaching, tutoring,
5 serving as a parent liaison, and providing support to staff
6 and the Reading Lab; she was noted for instilling a passion for
7 learning in her students, serving as a mentor to her
8 colleagues, and providing creative bulletin boards throughout
9 the school and stage decorations for eighth grade graduations;
10 after retiring from her 30-year career, she was presented with
11 a proclamation from the Chicago Board of Education in
12 recognition of her contributions to children's education; and

13 WHEREAS, Mildred Kenerson committed to her faith at an
14 early age, remaining devoted to her home church, St. John
15 Baptist Church in Braxton, Mississippi; she was a member of
16 Bethel Methodist Church while residing in Troy, New York;
17 after moving to Chicago, she attended New Morning Star Baptist
18 Church at its location on Harding Street and later on Hamlin,
19 becoming a faithful member and serving the Culinary and
20 Beautification Ministries; she later attended Holy Starlight
21 Missionary Baptist Church, where she helped decorate the
22 Fellowship Hall for teas, fashion shows, and holiday programs;
23 she then joined Greater New Friendship Missionary Baptist
24 Church; she and her husband, John, were members of the

1 University Charity Club of churches throughout Chicago, and
2 she coordinated many of the club's fundraisers, including
3 fashion shows and banquets; and

4 WHEREAS, Mildred Kenerson celebrated turning 100 years of
5 age at the historic Parkway Ballroom on April 27, 2019, where
6 she was presented a Silver Life Membership by the Westside
7 Branch of the NAACP, a proclamation honoring her long life by
8 the John Marshall Alumni Association, an acknowledgment of her
9 faithfulness to St. John Baptist Church by her niece Felecia
10 Perkins on behalf of the church, and a resolution by the Cook
11 County Board of Commissioners, which was presented by Board
12 President Toni Preckwinkle and sponsored by 2nd District
13 Commissioner Dennis Deer; she was later recognized as an
14 outstanding person who is older than 100 years at the Ezra
15 Projects 11th Trailblazer Legacy Awards Gala in November 2023;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, Mildred Kenerson wore a hat for all occasions,
18 especially on Sunday mornings; she enjoyed a variety of
19 activities, including baking her infamous "S" cookies and
20 fruit cake, completing word search puzzles, watching her
21 favorite game shows, and eating at her favorite restaurant,
22 Pappadeaux Seafood Kitchen; she especially enjoyed creating
23 handmade birthday and other special occasion cards and
24 decorations for various churches; she cherished birthday

1 gatherings, where she could spend time with her family,
2 children, and "young'uns", who were often the children of her
3 friends who saw her as another maternal figure; and

4 WHEREAS, Mildred Kenerson, affectionately known as "Red"
5 or "Mrs. K", was a distinguished, outstanding, and remarkable
6 woman of dignity, character, style, and grace; she will be
7 remembered as a staple of the 24th Ward community and for her
8 creativity, keen sense of humor, unique perspective, and
9 compassion; therefore, be it

10 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
11 HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
12 we mourn the passing of Mildred Austin Kenerson and extend our
13 sincere condolences to her family, friends, and all who knew
14 and loved her; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
16 presented to the family of Mildred Kenerson as an expression
17 of our deepest sympathy.