



HR0462

LRB104 15340 ECR 28494 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 Raymond  
4 Ben-Kuey Lee of Chicago, who passed away on August 31, 2025;  
5 and

6           WHEREAS, Raymond Lee was born in Guangdong, China on  
7 September 7, 1934; he immigrated to the United States at the  
8 age of 16; he settled with family in Chicago, where he worked  
9 at a grocery store business started by his great-grandfather,  
10 Quong Yick & Co., through his teen and early college years; and

11           WHEREAS, Raymond Lee and his wife, Jean T. Lee, founded  
12 and ran Golden Country Oriental Foods for more than 30 years;  
13 during their tenure, their business branched out into the  
14 wholesale business, resulting in it becoming one of the  
15 largest importers of Asian, Caribbean, and African food  
16 products in the United States; and

17           WHEREAS, Raymond Lee was instrumental in the successful  
18 growth of Chicago's Chinatown through his business ventures,  
19 community leadership, and philanthropy; as president and board  
20 chairman of the Chinese American Development Corporation  
21 (CADC), he aided in the construction of Chinatown Square;  
22 through his work as one of the founders and a managing director

1 of the Chinatown Parking Corporation (CPC), two parking lots  
2 were made accessible for the neighborhood's business  
3 community; as president of the Chicago Chinatown Chamber of  
4 Commerce (CCCC), he was responsible for Chinatown's iconic  
5 Chinese Pagoda and Nine Dragon Wall, implementing new safety  
6 measures and regular street cleaning and introducing a now  
7 annual summer fair; he also served as an elder and a board  
8 officer of the Lee Family Association and as a board member of  
9 the Chinese American Service League; and

10 WHEREAS, Raymond Lee further served his community through  
11 public office; as a commissioner of the Chicago Park District  
12 and a member of the Chicago Board of Education, he procured  
13 funds to build Ping Tom Memorial Park and to renovate the  
14 100-year-old John C. Haines Elementary School; outside of  
15 public office, he documented Chinatown's history through his  
16 memoir, *Growing Up in Chicago's Chinatown: The Stories of*  
17 *Raymond Lee*, published in 2015; and

18 WHEREAS, Raymond Lee and his wife remained committed to  
19 serving Chicago's Chinatown community, donating the Quong Yick  
20 & Co. building in 2004, which was converted into the Chinese  
21 American Museum of Chicago (CAMOC); they continued to support  
22 CAMOC over the next 20 years, providing a residual  
23 contribution from the dissolution of CADC after the completion  
24 of Chinatown Square and making a \$2,000,000 restricted

1 endowment fund in memory of Jean after her passing in June  
2 2023; in honor of their dedication, they became the namesake  
3 of the museum building, the Raymond B. and Jean T. Lee Center;  
4 and

5 WHEREAS, Raymond Lee received numerous accolades  
6 throughout his life, including the 2007 Luminary Award from  
7 the Chicago Senior Citizen Hall of Fame, the 2010  
8 Philanthropic Award from CAMOC, the 2012 Outstanding Community  
9 Leader Award from the Chicago Cultural Alliance, the 2012 Pan  
10 Asian American Ping Tom Memorial Award from the Asian American  
11 Coalition of Chicago and the CCCC, the 2023 Lifetime  
12 Achievement Award from the Coalition for a Better Chinese  
13 American Community, and the 2023 Community Visionary Award  
14 from the Chinatown Museum Foundation (CMF); and

15 WHEREAS, Raymond Lee left a lasting impact on the Chinese  
16 American community of Chicago, and he will be remembered for  
17 his generosity and foresight; therefore, be it

18 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE  
19 HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
20 we mourn the passing of Raymond Ben-Kuey Lee and extend our  
21 sincere condolences to his family, friends, and all who knew  
22 and loved him; and be it further

1           RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
2 presented to the family of Raymond Lee as an expression of our  
3 deepest sympathy.