



HR0533

LRB104 16053 ECR 29320 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives are saddened to learn of the death of Joseph Caldwell of Chicago, who passed away on October 14, 2025; and

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WHEREAS, Joseph Caldwell was born to Florence Wilson Walker and Joe Nathan Caldwell in Marvell, Arkansas on December 19, 1932; he committed to his faith at an early age and was baptized at New Light Baptist Church in Marvell; he attended Tate High School, where he played baseball and boxed, while sharecropping with his family; and

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WHEREAS, Joseph Caldwell moved to Chicago at the age of 16, attending Wells High School and working at a mattress factory at night; he assisted his family during the cotton picking season in 1950, returning to Chicago in 1951; he served in the United States Air Force during the Korean War, where he was stationed at Lockbourne Air Force Base and was deployed to Casablanca, Morocco, earning the rank of corporal and being discharged in 1954; he completed an 18-month course at Metropolitan School of Tailoring in 1956, earning the rank of master custom tailor; he married Barbara Jean King in 1958; he later studied business at the Illinois Institute of Technology in 1959 and finished his education at Marion Business College in 1960; and

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1           WHEREAS, Joseph Caldwell and his business partners,  
2           Celious Henderson, Richard Phillips, and Esley Williams,  
3           opened Tailorite Complete Clothing Care Company in 1956;  
4           together, they grew the company into one that has served some  
5           of Chicago's most famous and influential people and entities,  
6           including Reverend Jesse Jackson, Mayor Harold Washington, the  
7           Chicago Bulls, the Chicago White Sox, United Airlines, the  
8           Museum of Science and Industry, the Chicago Public Library,  
9           Netflix, Trinity Unity Church of Christ, the Israel Church of  
10          God, and the Chicago and Metropolitan Chapters of Delta Sigma  
11          Theta Sorority, Incorporated; and

12          WHEREAS, Joseph Caldwell cofounded the Gentleman's Tailor  
13          Club in 1956, through which they hosted many parties to raise  
14          money for charitable causes; he was a member of Mount Calvary  
15          Church in Glenwood; he was also active in and led many  
16          organizations, including the Seaway Bank Board, the Washington  
17          Park Business Association, the Chatham Business Association,  
18          South Central Community Services, the Illinois Dry Cleaners  
19          Association, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and  
20          Operation PUSH; he also played a role in several  
21          congressional, senatorial, aldermanic, and mayoral campaigns;  
22          and

23          WHEREAS, Joseph Caldwell was the recipient of many

1 accolades, including being the namesake of the Honorary Joseph  
2 Caldwell Way at 84th Street and South Cottage Grove Avenue in  
3 Chicago in 2011, inducted into the National Civil Rights  
4 Library in 2022, named one of Chicago's unsung heroes by the  
5 Greater Chatham Initiative in 2023, and featured in Vogue  
6 magazine in 2025; and

7 WHEREAS, Joseph Caldwell will be remembered as a pioneer  
8 in business and for the impact he made on his community and the  
9 City of Chicago; and

10 WHEREAS, Joseph Caldwell was preceded in death by his  
11 parents and his siblings, Louis Clarence Allen, Florence Mae  
12 Allen Washington, Willie Lee Robinson, Juanita (Jack) Robinson  
13 Banks, and Nathan Caldwell; and

14 WHEREAS, Joseph Caldwell is survived by his wife, Barbara  
15 Caldwell; his children, Vernon Caldwell, Karen (Kevin Fleming)  
16 Caldwell, Veta Caldwell Charles, and Joseph Caldwell Jr.; nine  
17 grandchildren; his nephew, Johnny (Sharon) Washington; his  
18 cousin, Flora Robinson; his siblings, Charles Robinson, Lee  
19 (Genevieve) Robinson, Benjamin McKinney, Francis (Frank)  
20 McKinney Johnson, and Antionette (Thomas) Caldwell; and a host  
21 of nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends; therefore, be it

22 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE

1 HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
2 we mourn the passing of Joseph Caldwell and extend our sincere  
3 condolences to his family, friends, and all who knew and loved  
4 him; and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
6 presented to the family of Joseph Caldwell as an expression of  
7 our deepest sympathy.