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LRB104 11903 LAW 21994 r

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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 Carroll Ray Phelps, Ph.D., who passed away on November 15, 2024; and

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WHEREAS, Dr. Phelps was born to Cecil and Hazel Phelps in Texas City on January 3, 1946; and

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WHEREAS, Dr. Phelps was the bass singer and comedic relief for The Phelps Brothers, a gospel quartet that included his three brothers and was formed after they competed in and won a talent contest in 1955; they spent the next 65-plus years singing gospel music all over the United States and sang full-time professionally from 1972 to 1978, during which they toured with other well-known gospel groups, including The Oak Ridge Boys, The Stamps Quartet, and The Blackwood Brothers Quartet; during their musical career, they were nominated as Best New Group by the Gospel Music Association in 1973 and were also the first gospel group to sing at the new Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tennessee; and

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WHEREAS, Dr. Phelps was a leader in the field of education, both as a teacher and an administrator, becoming known for constantly seeking ways to improve the educational process and implementing many programs to benefit the learning

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1 environment of his students; he began his teaching career at
2 Eldorado High School (EHS); he served as president of the
3 Eldorado teachers' union in the early 1970s and led one of the
4 first teachers' strikes in the State of Illinois; he became
5 principal of EHS in 1988; during his tenure, he opened a child
6 care center located inside the school, allowing students with
7 young children to continue their studies and thereby ensuring
8 many obtained their high school diplomas; and

9 WHEREAS, Dr. Phelps became superintendent of Gallatin
10 County Schools after earning his Ph.D. in Education from
11 Southern Illinois University Carbondale in 1996; while there,
12 he recognized that students and their families lacked access
13 to medical care, leading him to coordinate with a health
14 system in Evansville, Indiana to create the Gallatin County
15 Wellness Center, which has been providing primary care
16 services for the Gallatin County community since 2003; near
17 the end of his career, he became a faculty member and professor
18 at Oakland City University in Indiana, where he started a
19 Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) doctoral program, before
20 concluding his career as superintendent of Hardin County
21 Schools; and

22 WHEREAS, Dr. Phelps was devoted to his faith throughout
23 his entire life and was a member of Star General Baptist
24 Church, where he was the longest-serving member prior to his

1 death and served in many capacities, including as a choir
2 member, the Sunday school superintendent, a Sunday school
3 teacher, and a member of numerous committees; and

4 WHEREAS, Dr. Phelps kept very close relationships with his
5 sons and especially enjoyed spending time with his family at
6 church and family dinners on Sundays; he and his wife were
7 inseparable, and they loved doing things together; he and his
8 brothers were each other's best friends, and they enjoyed
9 having dinner together with their wives in Marion on Friday
10 nights; he dearly loved his grandchildren and enjoyed
11 attending their sporting events, recitals, and plays; and

12 WHEREAS, Dr. Phelps was preceded in death by his parents;
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14 WHEREAS, Dr. Phelps is survived by his wife, Chris Phelps;
15 his sons, Kelly (Kelly Lynne) Phelps and Aaron (Arianne)
16 Phelps; his grandchildren, Kennedy Carroll (Dallas Cockrum)
17 Cockrum, Kole Phelps, Victoria "Tori" Phelps, and Jake Phelps;
18 his great-grandchild, Lyncoln Rae Cockrum; his brothers, Larry
19 (Kathy) Phelps, David (Leslie) Phelps, and Dennis Michael
20 "Mike" (Barbara) Phelps; his brother-in-law, Mark Bauer;
21 numerous nieces and nephews; and a special friend to the
22 family, Sue Easton; therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL
2 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
3 Carroll Ray Phelps, Ph.D. and extend our sincere condolences
4 to his family, friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be
5 it further

6 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
7 presented to the family of Dr. Phelps as an expression of our
8 deepest sympathy.