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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 Sister Jean Dolores Schmidt of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM), the iconic chaplain of the Loyola University Chicago men's basketball team, the Ramblers, who passed away on October 9, 2025 at the age of 106; and

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WHEREAS, Sister Jean was born Dolores Bertha Schmidt on August 21, 1919; she was a native of San Francisco, California; she joined the BVM in 1937, taking the name Sister Jean Dolores; and

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WHEREAS, Sister Jean taught at several Catholic schools in both Chicago and California before coming to teach at Mundelein College in 1961; over the next 30 years, she held numerous roles at Mundelein College until the educational institution affiliated with Loyola University Chicago in 1991; she engaged in an academic advisor role with the men's basketball team in 1993, and she later transitioned to the position of team chaplain; she long maintained a key role in supporting the Ramblers, offering both spiritual support and practical advice on the players' game performance; and

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WHEREAS, Sister Jean, though long known for her many roles

1 at Loyola University Chicago, became an international
2 celebrity at the age of 98 during the 2018 NCAA March Madness
3 tournament when she accompanied the Ramblers as they reached
4 the Final Four for the first time since the program's historic
5 1963 national championship season; she cheered for the team
6 from the sidelines that season, where her presence as team
7 chaplain captured the attention of the media; she became one
8 of the most talked-about topics of the 2018 tournament, and
9 merchandise featuring her likeness and her motto of "Worship,
10 Work, Win" sold swiftly; and

11 WHEREAS, Sister Jean, in addition to her work with the
12 Ramblers, also held weekly prayer groups for students and
13 started a program called SMILE (Students Moving Into the Lives
14 of the Elderly), which paired Loyola students with residents
15 of The Clare, an assisted living community on the Water Tower
16 campus that she called home for many years; and

17 WHEREAS, Sister Jean co-authored her memoir, Wake Up with
18 Purpose!: What I've Learned in My First Hundred Years, with
19 Seth Davis, which was published in February 2023; and

20 WHEREAS, Sister Jean received a number of honors and
21 accolades, including being inducted into the Loyola University
22 Chicago Athletics Hall of Fame in 2017 and awarded the Sword of
23 Loyola in 2018; she was further recognized by church and world

1 leaders for her joy and service; for her 100th birthday, she
2 received an Apostolic Blessing from Pope Francis; at her 103rd
3 birthday celebration on August 21, 2022, she received the
4 honor of the Loyola CTA Red Line plaza being renamed after her,
5 with proclamations from both Governor JB Pritzker and Chicago
6 Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot dedicating the day in her honor; on her
7 105th birthday, she received a proclamation from President Joe
8 Biden in recognition of her lifetime of service; and

9 WHEREAS, Sister Jean was a woman of prayer, a dedicated
10 educator, and a bearer of hope who loved her BVM community; she
11 will be remembered as an invaluable source of wisdom, love,
12 compassion, and grace to generations of Loyola University
13 Chicago students, faculty, and staff; and

14 WHEREAS, Sister Jean was preceded in death by her parents
15 and her brothers, Edward and Raymond Schmidt; and

16 WHEREAS, Sister Jean is survived by her sister-in-law,
17 Margaret Schmidt; her nieces and nephews; and her fellow BVM
18 sisters; therefore, be it

19 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL
20 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
21 Sister Jean Dolores Schmidt of the Sisters of Charity of the
22 Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM), the iconic chaplain of the Loyola

1 University Chicago men's basketball team, the Ramblers, and
2 extend our sincere condolences to her family, friends, and all
3 who knew and loved her; and be it further

4 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
5 presented to the family of Sister Jean as an expression of our
6 deepest sympathy.