



HR1184

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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 Lewis
4 Myers Jr., who passed away on May 24, 2018; and

5 WHEREAS, Lewis Myers was born in Houston, Texas and
6 graduated with honors from Phillis Wheatley High School in
7 1965; he was elected NAACP Youth Council President for the
8 Houston branch and led student demonstrations that helped
9 integrate the Houston Independent School District; and

10 WHEREAS, Lewis Myers studied at Tennessee State
11 University, where he joined the Student Non-Violent
12 Coordinating Committee (S.N.C.C.) Chapter; he also became
13 chairman of the Students Rights Organization Chapter at
14 Tennessee State; he transferred to Howard University, and in
15 1968, was elected president of the Undergraduate Student
16 Council; and

17 WHEREAS, Lewis Myers entered law school at Rutgers
18 University, where he initiated a program called the Southern
19 Mobilization Committee, which gave African American law
20 students the opportunity to work in the Deep South with civil
21 rights firms during their summer breaks; he later transferred
22 to the University of Mississippi, which allowed him to work in

1 rural Mississippi and expand his civil rights work; he earned
2 his law degree from the University of Mississippi in 1972; he
3 was a student assistant to famed constitutional and civil
4 rights lawyer Herbert Reid who was the former Dean of the Law
5 School at Howard University, as well as Chief Counsel to
6 legendary Congressman Adam Clayton Powell Jr. from New York;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, In 1971, Lewis Myers worked with what was then
9 called the Goldberg Commission in New York City; he served as
10 an assistant on the staff and visited many of the cities where
11 the Black Panther Party had been involved in confrontations
12 with the local police departments; and

13 WHEREAS, Lewis Myers accepted a Reginald Heber Smith
14 Fellowship, which enabled him to work with a civil rights legal
15 services program across the United States; he was selected to
16 work in Mississippi, where he started working as a staff
17 attorney with North Mississippi Rural Legal Services in Oxford;
18 initially, he handled school desegregation cases; however,
19 within a year of his graduation from law school, he filed suit
20 on behalf of African American law students at the University in
21 the case of Robinson vs. University of Mississippi; the lawsuit
22 challenged the University's historic policies of racial
23 discrimination and exclusion of African Americans from
24 admission to its law school and subsequently opened up the

1 admissions process which has allowed many African American
2 students to complete their education since that time; and

3 WHEREAS, After serving for several years at North
4 Mississippi Rural Legal Services, Lewis Myers became Director
5 of Litigation in charge of more than 45 lawyers and 40
6 paralegals; he was responsible for managing seven legal service
7 offices throughout cities in Northern Mississippi and the
8 Mississippi Delta; he initiated numerous lawsuits challenging
9 racial discrimination in municipal governments and in private
10 employment practices in the State of Mississippi; in 1973, he
11 was one of the lawyers that filed the historic case of Ayers
12 vs. Mississippi which ultimately led to the desegregation of
13 institutions of higher learning in the United States after
14 reaching the United States Supreme Court; between 1974 and
15 1976, he was on the cutting edge of filing more than six
16 lawsuits against county jails in the State of Mississippi for
17 inhumane conditions and the treatment of their inmates; and

18 WHEREAS, Lewis Myers was involved in numerous historic
19 cases, including Ayers vs. Mississippi, the People of the State
20 of Illinois vs. Larry Hoover, New Jersey vs. Joanne Chesmard
21 a/k/a Assata Shakur-mother of Tupac Shakur, the United States
22 vs. Rene Leon, and the Elmer "Geronimo" Pratt case; he served
23 as counsel for seven young boys who were expelled from the
24 Decatur public schools after a fight at a football game; and

1 WHEREAS, Lewis Myers served as general counsel for several
2 national civil rights leaders, including Minister Louis
3 Farrakhan, Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, and Rev. Al Sharpton; he
4 served as chief operating officer and the national deputy
5 director of the NAACP in Baltimore; in August of 1993, he
6 served as national deputy coordinator of the historic 30th
7 anniversary for the March on Washington; and

8 WHEREAS, Lewis Myers was one of the top litigation lawyers
9 in the Chicago area; he taught Evidence and Trial Advocacy as
10 an adjunct professor at DePaul University's School of Law in
11 Chicago; he taught at several Chicago City Colleges and served
12 as director of the Criminal Justice Program at Kennedy King
13 College; he was also a professor teaching Criminal Justice at
14 Chicago State University; and

15 WHEREAS, Lewis Myers was a member of the Illinois Bar, the
16 Bar of the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals, the Bar of the
17 Federal Appellate Court for the Third Circuit, the Bar for the
18 Federal Appellate Court for the Fifth Circuit, the Bar of the
19 United States Federal District Court for the Northern District
20 of California, and the Bar for the Federal Court of Claims; he
21 was a member of the National Conference of Black Lawyers, the
22 National Lawyers' Guild (Executive Board, Chicago Chapter),
23 the National Bar Association, the National Association of

1 Criminal Defense Attorneys, and the National Conference of
2 Black Lawyers (Chairperson, Chicago Chapter); he held
3 memberships with several professional organizations, including
4 Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, the NAACP (Life Member), 500 Black
5 Men (Founder of Chicago Chapter), Black Men's Forum, and the
6 American Historical Association; he was the recipient of many
7 accolades and awards; he was listed in several Who's Who
8 publications and was recognized as one of the most influential
9 African Americans in the United States in various national
10 publications; and

11 WHEREAS, Lewis Myers is survived by his wife, Celestine
12 Narcisse-Myers, and his son, Lewis Myers III; therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
14 HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
15 mourn the passing of Lewis Myers Jr., and extend our sincere
16 condolences to his family, friends, and all who knew and loved
17 him; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
19 presented to the family of Lewis Myers as an expression of our
20 deepest sympathy.