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HOUSE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives are saddened to learn of the death of Carolyn Jean Boddie Gibson, who passed away on April 12, 2019; and

WHEREAS, Carolyn Gibson was born in Little Rock, Arkansas to Richard L. and Dorothy Wiggins Boddie on April 9, 1931 and was raised by her grandparents, Lula and E.D. Wiggins, after the passing of her mother; she attended Dunbar High School and graduated from Arkansas AM&N (University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff), where she was a majorette, homecoming queen, and charter member of the Delta Eta Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.; she married Ernest Gibson; and

WHEREAS, Carolyn Gibson joined the Freshman Studies Department at Arkansas AM&N, eventually becoming the Director of Counseling and Testing; and

WHEREAS, Shortly after Brown v Board of Education (1954), Carolyn Gibson helped provide support to the families of the Little Rock Nine during the struggle for integration of Little Rock Central High School, her first active involvement in the Civil Rights Movement; and

WHEREAS, In 1962, Carolyn Gibson and her family moved to

1 Birmingham, Alabama, where they operated the A.G. Gaston Motel  
2 and Restaurant, which was a part of several "Green Book"  
3 locations across the South that provided African Americans  
4 lodging and dining; the Gaston Motel was the headquarters and  
5 the residence of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern  
6 Christian Leadership Conference in their efforts to  
7 desegregate public facilities in Birmingham; the motel hosted  
8 leaders and celebrities from all over the world who came there  
9 for strategy meetings, marches, and other events; the hotel was  
10 a constant target of harassment and arrests, culminating in the  
11 bombing of the motel on Mother's Day 1963; and

12 WHEREAS, In 1964, Carolyn Gibson and Ernie accepted  
13 positions in the Joliet public schools; in the fall of 1967,  
14 they were instrumental in bringing Dr. King to Joliet to speak;  
15 the family moved to Glen Ellyn and Carolyn became the third  
16 black educator in Wheaton, where she taught for the next 25  
17 years; and

18 WHEREAS, Carolyn Gibson was active in the faculty wives  
19 organization for the College of DuPage, where she earned a  
20 master's degree in reading; and

21 WHEREAS, Each year since the inception of the federal  
22 holiday marking the birthday of Dr. King, Carolyn Gibson  
23 planned her school's observance; her efforts were featured in a

1 Chicago Tribune article in 1990, "Mrs. Gibson, Tell Us About  
2 Martin Luther King"; she also started her school's annual  
3 observance of Black History Month; and

4 WHEREAS, Carolyn Gibson was involved in many activities  
5 aimed at the betterment of the quality of education; she served  
6 as vice president of the Wheaton-Warrenville Education  
7 Association Diversity Committee and chairperson of the board of  
8 directors of the Illinois Education Association (IEA) Region  
9 32; she was a member of the IEA Executive Committee, the NEA  
10 National Education Committee, the NEA Black Caucus, and the NEA  
11 Resolutions Committee; she was a frequent Illinois delegate to  
12 NEA national conventions; and

13 WHEREAS, Carolyn Gibson was a founding member and the first  
14 president of the Glen Ellyn Area Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma  
15 Theta Sorority, Inc., where she was a Golden Life member; she  
16 was a charter member of the West Towns Chapter of Links, Inc.,  
17 where she was a Platinum member; she served for six years as  
18 president of the DuPage County branch of the NAACP and was a  
19 member of the board of directors of the DuPage County Girl  
20 Scouts; and

21 WHEREAS, Carolyn Gibson and Ernie, along with others, were  
22 founders of the DuPage AME Church; she and Ernie headed the  
23 fundraising efforts in the western suburbs for the mayoral

1 campaign of Harold Washington; they both were appointed by the  
2 governor to serve on the state committee to make Dr. King's  
3 birthday a federal observance; and

4 WHEREAS, In 1996, Carolyn Gibson "retired" to Olympia  
5 Fields; she was appointed in 2001 to complete a term as clerk  
6 for the Village of Olympia Fields; she was elected as a trustee  
7 for Olympia Fields in 2003 and served for 16 years; during her  
8 tenure, she was trustee liaison to the Public Safety Committee,  
9 the Community Relations Commission, and the Police Pension  
10 Board; she was also a member of the Olympia Fields Enhancement  
11 Organization; and

12 WHEREAS, Carolyn Gibson served on the board of the Good  
13 Shepherd Center, which provides support, service, and  
14 education for adults and children with and without  
15 disabilities; she also served as its vice president; she was a  
16 national board member and president of the Chicago Chapter of  
17 the Dunbar/Horace Mann National Alumni Association; and

18 WHEREAS, Carolyn Gibson loved reading books and enjoyed her  
19 membership in the Meant To Be book club, where she actively  
20 participated for 16 years; she set a high example of excellence  
21 for her girls; she was extremely proud of her daughters and  
22 spent much time touting their successes; for the past 35 years,  
23 her family has taken a yearly trip, which included visiting

1 such destinations as the Bahamas, Mexico, Florida, Colorado,  
2 and Nevada; for the past 14 years, the family has met on  
3 Martha's Vineyard; and

4 WHEREAS, Carolyn Gibson is survived by her husband, Ernie;  
5 her daughters, Stephanie Gibson Branton (Wiley) and Dorothy  
6 Capers (Steve); her grandchildren, Carolyn Lucille Branton  
7 Smith (Courtney), Wiley Austin Branton III, Mariah Cathryn  
8 Matthews, and Mackenzie Marie Capers; her brother, Richard E.  
9 Boddie; her nieces, Wyndolyn Boddie Hughes (Roy) and Debbie  
10 Gibson; her nephew, Richard Lamont Boddie; and numerous other  
11 family, bonus children, and friends; therefore, be it

12 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE  
13 HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
14 we mourn the passing of Carolyn Jean Boddie Gibson and extend  
15 our sincere condolences to her family, friends, and all who  
16 knew and loved her; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
18 presented to the family of Carolyn Gibson as an expression of  
19 our deepest sympathy.