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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 Justice
4 Charles E. Freeman of Chicago, who passed away on March 2,
5 2020; and

6 WHEREAS, Justice Freeman was born in Richmond, Virginia on
7 December 12, 1933; he was descended from slaves freed by
8 Quakers before the American Civil War; he earned a Bachelor of
9 Arts in Liberal Arts from Virginia Union University in
10 Richmond, Virginia in June 1954; he earned his Juris Doctor
11 from the John Marshall Law School in Chicago in February 1962;
12 and

13 WHEREAS, Early in his professional career, Justice Freeman
14 served Illinois as an assistant attorney general, an assistant
15 state's attorney, and an attorney for the Board of Election
16 Commissioners while in private practice from 1962 to 1979; he
17 was appointed by then Governor Otto Kerner as an arbitrator to
18 the Illinois Industrial Commission in January 1965, where he
19 heard and wrote decisions on more than 2,000 work-related
20 injury cases; he served in that capacity until September 1973;
21 he was appointed by then Governor Dan Walker as a commissioner
22 on the Illinois Commerce Commission and served from September
23 1973 to December 1976; and

1 WHEREAS, For 10 years, Justice Freeman served on the Cook
2 County Circuit Court, winning two elections in the process;
3 while a circuit court judge, he became the first African
4 American to swear in a Chicago mayor in 1982, his longtime
5 friend Harold Washington; he was elected to the Appellate Court
6 in 1986; and

7 WHEREAS, Justice Freeman was elected to the Illinois
8 Supreme Court on November 6, 1990, becoming the first African
9 American to serve; he was selected as Chief Justice on May 12,
10 1997 and served in that capacity until January 1, 2000; during
11 his tenure as chief justice, he oversaw improved efficiency of
12 the Family Violence Prevention program, the establishment of a
13 judicial web page, and the reorganization of the rotation of
14 assignments of appellate judges in the First Judicial District,
15 ending the practice that allowed appellate judges in Cook
16 County to sit on the same panel for their lifetimes; he retired
17 in 2018; and

18 WHEREAS, Justice Freeman was a member of the Cook County,
19 Illinois State, and DuPage County Bar Associations; he was also
20 a member of the Illinois Judicial Council, the Illinois Judges
21 Association, the American Judges Association, and the American
22 Judicature Society; he received numerous awards throughout his
23 career, including the Freedom Award from the John Marshall Law

1 School, the Seymour Simon Justice Award from the Jewish Judges
2 Association, the Earl Burrus Dickerson Award from the Chicago
3 Bar Association, the Ira B. Platt Award, and the Presidential
4 Award from the Cook County Bar Association; and

5 WHEREAS, Justice Freeman was known as a trailblazer with a
6 sharp legal mind, a gentleman, and a devoted family man; and

7 WHEREAS, Justice Freeman was preceded in death by his wife
8 of 50 years, Marylee; and

9 WHEREAS, Justice Freeman is survived by his son, Kevin
10 (Cami) Freeman; his grandchildren, Skye Marie Freeman and Miles
11 Charles Freeman; and his brother, James Freeman; therefore, be
12 it

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

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