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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 James
4 Michael "Mike" Mills of Murphysboro, who passed away on
5 December 29, 2020; and

6 WHEREAS, Mike Mills was born in Cape Girardeau, Missouri to
7 Faye and Leon Mills on July 15, 1941; he graduated from
8 Murphysboro Township High School, where he was a member of the
9 1958 Hall of Fame football team; he graduated from the first
10 class of Dental Technology at Southern Illinois University; and

11 WHEREAS, Mike Mills founded the Murphysboro Dental Lab in
12 1963; and

13 WHEREAS, Mike Mills opened 17th Street Barbecue in 1985; he
14 was later called the "most-revered barbecue restaurateur in
15 America"; he was the barbecue guru at, and a partner in, the
16 Blue Smoke restaurant in New York City and a founding partner
17 in Memphis Championship Barbecue in Las Vegas; and

18 WHEREAS, Mike Mills earned the moniker "The Legend" in the
19 early 1990s, when he was co-captain of the Apple City Barbecue
20 team, one of the most celebrated teams ever on the circuit; he
21 is known throughout the State of Illinois, the United States,

1 and the world for his legendary barbecue pit master skills; and

2 WHEREAS, Mike Mills is the co-author of two books, Peace,
3 Love, and Barbecue and Praise the Lard: Recipes and Revelations
4 from a Legendary Life in Barbecue; he was inducted into the
5 Barbecue Hall of Fame in 2010; and

6 WHEREAS, Mike Mills was an active member in numerous
7 community organizations, including the Elks, Masons, and
8 Shriners; and

9 WHEREAS, Mike Mills was named a Distinguished Alumni in
10 2014 by Murphysboro Township High School; and

11 WHEREAS, Mike Mills was a beloved figure in Southern
12 Illinois, employing hard-working Illinoisans at his
13 restaurants and giving to charity and to his community; his
14 years of dedicated work helped earn his hometown, Murphysboro,
15 the distinction of being named the BBQ Capital of Illinois in
16 2015 by the Illinois General Assembly; and

17 WHEREAS, Mike Mills was preceded in death by his siblings,
18 Robert Mills and Jeanette Hudgins; and

19 WHEREAS, Mike is survived by his children, Amy Jane Mills
20 and Christopher Mills; his grandchildren, Guy W. (Woody)

1 Tunnickliffe III and Faye Landess Tunnickliffe; his siblings,
2 Landess Mills and Mary Pat Mills; his brother-in-law, John
3 Hudgins; and numerous nieces and nephews; therefore, be it

4 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
5 HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
6 we mourn the death and celebrate the life, the contributions,
7 the achievements, and the positive impact that James Michael
8 "Mike" Mills had on the communities of Murphysboro and Marion;
9 and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
11 presented to the family of Mike Mills and to 17th Street BBQ
12 Restaurants in Marion and in Murphysboro as symbols of our
13 deepest sympathy.