



SR0553

LRB101 12921 ALS 61756 r

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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 J.W. Pirtle, who passed away on June 15, 2019; and

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WHEREAS, J. W. Pirtle was born in Bolivar, Tennessee to Will and Nishie Pirtle on December 22, 1931; he graduated from Bruce High School in Dyersburg, Tennessee in 1949; during the summer of 1951, he moved to Champaign; in 1952, he joined the United States Army, where he oversaw the U.S. Base Motor Pool, and served honorably; he married Alice Burge in 1961; and

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WHEREAS, Upon completion of his tour of duty, J.W. Pirtle began working as a body and fender repairman at the Danna Huddlerson Ford Company; he then realized he needed more formal training and enrolled in Greenleaf Trade School in Chicago, where he studied auto mechanics and management; he also completed a 12-month program in body and fender repair; in 1956, he purchased property and established his business as the first Black man in Champaign to own and operate a Shell Gas Station; in 1963, he opened Pirtle's Restaurant; in 1967, he opened the Central Cab Company and a body and fender shop at the same location; he was the first Black man to own limousines in Champaign, as well as the first taxi service to utilize station wagons and vans; in 1976, he began working for the

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1 State in the Department of Central Management Services as
2 Manager, State of Illinois Motor Pool; he retired from that
3 position in 2000; and

4 WHEREAS, In 1989, J.W. Pirtle became a co-owner of the
5 radio station WBCP Soul, which was the only Black-owned station
6 East of the Mississippi River and South of Kankakee; WBCP Radio
7 was nominated for a Stellar Award in the Small Market Radio
8 Group in 2016; and

9 WHEREAS, J.W. Pirtle was a pitcher in the National Negro
10 Baseball League with the Minor League Champaign Eagles; he
11 often spoke about how, as baseball players, their teams were
12 welcomed at the Chicago White Sox stadium during the Civil
13 Rights Movement; he continued to be an avid lover of the sport;
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15 WHEREAS, J.W. Pirtle was a member of St. Luke CME Church
16 for more than 50 years and served as the Senior Usher on the
17 Usher Board and as a member of the board of trustees; he was a
18 devoted husband and father; and

19 WHEREAS, J.W. Pirtle was preceded in death by his parents;
20 his wife, Alice; his son, Michael Pirtle; his brothers, Alvin
21 LaSalle and James Edward Pirtle; and his sister, Lue Lena
22 Pirtle McDaniel; and

1 WHEREAS, J.W. Pirtle is survived by his children and
2 grandchildren, Justin Michael (Michael), Terrence Aljay
3 (Yvette), Alliyah Lee (Eric), and Jaelyn Alyssa (Pamela); his
4 sisters, Lois Pirtle, Ether Made Huffman, Katherine McKutchen,
5 and Marvarine Pirtle; and several nieces, nephews, other family
6 members, and friends; therefore, be it

7 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL
8 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
9 J.W. Pirtle and extend our sincere condolences to his family,
10 friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
12 presented to the family of J.W. Pirtle as an expression of our
13 deepest sympathy.