



HR0858

LRB102 27536 ECR 39330 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives wish to congratulate Justice Rita Bell Garman on the occasion of her retirement from the Illinois Supreme Court on July 7, 2022 after nearly five decades as a jurist; and

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WHEREAS, Justice Garman has faithfully served the people of Danville, Vermilion County, the Fourth Judicial District, and the entire State of Illinois in every level of the State's court system; she has always sought to honor her community and State through education and service to others; and

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WHEREAS, Justice Garman graduated as valedictorian of Oswego High School in 1961, with the highest honors in Economics from the University of Illinois in 1965, and from the University of Iowa College of Law with distinction in 1968; and

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WHEREAS, Justice Garman's prospective on life came from her humble upbringing in the small farming community of Oswego, where her parents, Dr. Sheldon and Ellen Bell, instilled in her and her siblings, Lynn and Sheldon, the importance of education and making an impact on her community; and

1           WHEREAS, Through those values, Justice Garman was led to  
2 break barriers and overcome obstacles and discrimination as  
3 she fought to begin her legal career when there were no women  
4 on the Illinois Supreme Court or the Illinois Appellate Court,  
5 and there were very few female judges in the State; and

6           WHEREAS, Justice Garman began her legal career with the  
7 Vermilion County Legal Aid Society and subsequently served as  
8 the first female Assistant Vermilion County State's Attorney;  
9 and

10           WHEREAS, Justice Garman learned that she had been  
11 appointed as the first female Associate Judge in her circuit  
12 by a radio alert on Christmas Eve in 1974; and

13           WHEREAS, Justice Garman was later appointed to the  
14 Illinois Appellate Court in 1995 and the Illinois Supreme  
15 Court in 2001, where she served as Chief Justice from 2013 to  
16 2016; and

17           WHEREAS, Justice Garman was instrumental in establishing a  
18 Special Court Committee on Child Custody Issues to ensure that  
19 children's best interests are the primary focus in child  
20 custody cases; and

1           WHEREAS, Justice Garman went on to become the longest  
2 serving judge in the State of Illinois, female or male, since  
3 1973; and

4           WHEREAS, Justice Garman was awarded a Lifetime Achievement  
5 Award in 2007 and the inaugural Harold Sullivan Award for  
6 Judicial Excellence in 2011; and

7           WHEREAS, Justice Garman has been known to share the  
8 successes of her career with those around her, including  
9 giving credit to her assistants, law clerks, marshals,  
10 jurists, and others in the judicial branch; and

11           WHEREAS, Justice Garman also credits her late husband Gill  
12 as being her rock throughout their entire relationship  
13 together and her sister Lynn for being a constant source of  
14 love and support; and

15           WHEREAS, Justice Garman looks forward to spending more  
16 time with her children and their spouses, Sara (John) and Andy  
17 (Meredith), and her grandchildren, Kathleen, Griffin,  
18 Samantha, Thomas, and Emily; and

19           WHEREAS, While Justice Garman was one of only eight female  
20 judges in the State when she was initially appointed, she is  
21 pleased to have witnessed the growth and acceptance of women

1 in the legal profession over her long and storied career;  
2 therefore, be it

3       RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE  
4 HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
5 we congratulate Justice Rita Bell Garman on her retirement,  
6 thank her for her years of service and dedication to the State  
7 of Illinois, and wish her the best in her future endeavors; and  
8 be it further

9       RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
10 presented to Justice Garman as a symbol of our respect and  
11 esteem.