



SR0062

LRB102 14501 LAW 19854 r

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SENATE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate are saddened
3 to learn of the death of Betty "BJ" Thetford of Metamora,
4 formerly of Washington, who passed away on January 10, 2021;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, BJ Thetford was born in Louisville, Kentucky to
7 Clarence Harder and Hazel (Bradshaw) Harder on December 27,
8 1931; she graduated from Woodruff High School in 1949, where
9 she belonged to the choir; she later attended Midstate College
10 to further hone her executive secretarial skills; she married
11 Gentry Cain Thetford in Peoria on March 18, 1951, and he
12 preceded her in death on February 8, 2013; and

13 WHEREAS, BJ Thetford was employed for the majority of her
14 career at Caterpillar; she began in the secretarial pool at
15 Caterpillar and worked in a number of positions; she left
16 Caterpillar only briefly to be reunited with Dr. Asbury, who
17 left as Caterpillar's medical director to become the medical
18 director for Proctor Hospital; she was devoted to her work and
19 enjoyed working for former Director of Public Affairs Byron
20 DeHaan and working with Steve Newhouse on the Caterpillar
21 Annual Report in the 1980s; after over 35 years, she retired
22 from the Personnel department of Caterpillar in 1993; during
23 her career, she belonged to Peoria's chapter of the National

1 Secretaries Association, where she served as a speaker and an
2 officer; she was an outstanding secretary and communicator,
3 and she was fiercely loyal to her superiors as well as her
4 coworkers; and

5 WHEREAS, BJ Thetford was a former member of Sunnyland
6 Christian Church before becoming a member at First Christian
7 Church in Peoria, where she served as a deacon and was a choir
8 member at both; she was a woman of many talents and was a
9 wonderful cook, seamstress, artist, and singer; she was in
10 barbershop quartets with her brother as a young adult; she was
11 a soloist for weddings and funerals; she was the former member
12 of a trio, consisting of Helen Manier, Norma Hoffmire, and
13 herself, from Sunnyland who sang at numerous events for a
14 number of years; she was later a member of the ECCU Keys with
15 her good friend Kay Sharp from Sunnyland, and they performed
16 at various churches and venues over the years while she also
17 served as the MC and comedienne between musical numbers; she
18 became a member of the Snyder Village Gospel Choir after she
19 moved to Snyder Village in 2010; and

20 WHEREAS, BJ Thetford firmly believed her children were her
21 greatest achievement, and she was known for her constant love
22 and support she gave her family; she will be deeply missed; and

23 WHEREAS, BJ Thetford was preceded in death by her husband;

1 her parents; and her brother, Elroy Harder; and

2 WHEREAS, BJ Thetford is survived by her children, Gale
3 Thetford, Donn Thetford, and Sheri (Robert) Perkins; her
4 grandsons, Nathan (Allison) Tonnies, Stuart Schmadeke (Lauren
5 Howard), Derek (Jessie) Thetford, Taylor Perkins, and Aaron
6 (Elsa) Perkins; her great-grandchildren, Tyler Mollman and
7 Hazel Tonnies; her sister, Caren (Dick) Lobo; her stepmother,
8 Alice Harder Ragan; and her nephew, Michael (Jamie) Harder;
9 therefore, be it

10 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL
11 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
12 Betty "BJ" Thetford and extend our sincere condolences to her
13 family, friends, and all who knew and loved her; and be it
14 further

15 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
16 presented to the family of BJ Thetford as an expression of our
17 deepest sympathy.