



SR0544

LRB102 20867 MST 29749 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 Sam Polk of Peoria, who passed away on September 17, 2021; and

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WHEREAS, Sam Polk was born in Memphis, Tennessee to Charlie and Nellie Jane (Jones) Polk on March 6, 1935 and received his early education in the Memphis school system; he moved to the Peoria area in the 1940s and attended Greenley and, later, Woodruff High School; he was a Boy Scout at Carver Center, Troop 38; he was inducted into the U.S. Army on March 15, 1955 and honorably served his country, including time spent in the Army Reserve, until March 15, 1963; and

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WHEREAS, Sam Polk worked for the Peoria Public Works Department for over 45 years; he served as a supervisor and retired in 2002; and

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WHEREAS, Sam Polk began serving the Peoria community through the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) local branch; as vice president, he advocated for equal employment opportunities for minorities, justice, voting rights, and overall basic human rights through peaceful boycotts, demonstrations, and organization; he volunteered and advocated for equality and had been a lifetime

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1 member of the NAACP since the 1950s; and

2 WHEREAS, Sam Polk was a former member of the Henry Brown  
3 Lodge PHA and member of the Peoria Tri-County Urban League's  
4 Guild; through the Tri-County Urban League, he supported the  
5 city's youth and the Scientists, Technicians and Managers  
6 Program; he also supported the Carver Center and served on the  
7 committee to reopen the center after its 2011 closure, which  
8 resulted in its reopening in 2013; and

9 WHEREAS, In his retirement, Sam Polk served as a mentor to  
10 a number of young men, teaching them work ethics, goal  
11 setting, financial management through stipends, decision  
12 making, character building, community involvement, and skill  
13 development through apprenticeship opportunities; he enjoyed  
14 supporting worthy causes, people, and organizations; he was  
15 always willing to give a hand to those willing to take a step;  
16 he contributed to many notable organizations, including the  
17 Heritage Ensemble, St. Martin De Porres Boy Scout Troop, local  
18 food pantries, Girl Scouts, St. Jude, Susan B. Komen, and The  
19 Whitney M. Young Jr. annual events; and

20 WHEREAS, Sam Polk had an amazing sense of humor, and he  
21 loved jazz music, especially albums by Myles Davis; and

22 WHEREAS, Sam Polk was preceded in death by his parents;

1 his daughter, Sheryl Gulley; his brother, James Polk; his  
2 grandson, Jonathan; and his nephew, Kevin Polk; and

3 WHEREAS, Sam Polk is survived by his wife of 47 years, Jean  
4 A. Polk; his children, Kenneth Sam Polk Sr. and Celeste  
5 (Donald) Polk-Coverdell; his grandchildren, Darnell, Kenneth  
6 Jr. (Tyeisha), Kevin Sr. (Jazmyn), Caleb, and Donavan; his  
7 great-grandchildren, Skylar, Kailani, Kassadi, Kevin Jr.,  
8 Kennedy, and Kaydence; his nieces, Jonelle (Daniel) McCloud,  
9 Rebecca Polk, and Karen (Billy) Raymond; and numerous other  
10 relatives and many friends; therefore, be it

11 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL  
12 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of  
13 Sam Polk and extend our sincere condolences to his family,  
14 friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be it further

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