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SENATE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate are saddened
3 to learn of the death of the Honorable Benjamin K. Miller,
4 former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Illinois, who
5 passed away on February 25, 2024; and

6 WHEREAS, Judge Miller was born to Clifford C. and Mary M.
7 Miller in Springfield on November 5, 1936; he graduated from
8 Springfield High School in 1954 and Southern Illinois
9 University Carbondale in 1958; he received his law degree from
10 Vanderbilt University Law School in 1961; he graduated from
11 the U.S. Army Intelligence School in Maryland in 1962; and

12 WHEREAS, Upon completion of law school, Judge Miller
13 returned to Springfield, where he worked in private practice
14 from 1961 to 1976; during this time, he served in both the U.S.
15 Army Reserve and U.S. Navy Reserve; he was appointed to the
16 Circuit Court for the 7th Judicial Circuit by the Supreme
17 Court of Illinois in 1976, and he was elected to that position
18 in 1978; he then served as Presiding Judge in the Criminal
19 Felony Division of the Circuit Court in Sangamon County from
20 1976 to 1980; he was elected Chief Judge of the 7th Judicial
21 Circuit, serving in that capacity until he was elected to the
22 4th District Appellate Court in 1982; and

1 WHEREAS, Judge Miller was elected to a ten-year term on
2 the Supreme Court of Illinois in 1984, representing the 4th
3 Judicial District, which covers much of central Illinois; he
4 was elected Chief Justice in 1991, becoming the first and only
5 Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Illinois to be from
6 Sangamon County; he served in that role until January 1, 1994;
7 that same year, he was reelected to the Supreme Court of
8 Illinois; and

9 WHEREAS, During his tenure as Chief Justice of the Supreme
10 Court of Illinois, Judge Miller was known for his
11 intelligence, ethics, and forward-thinking approach and for
12 always championing ways to improve the court system; his
13 leadership led to profound changes in the judicial system,
14 including expanding judicial performance evaluations
15 statewide, adding non-attorneys to disciplinary hearing boards
16 that ruled on lawyer misconduct, and clarifying the
17 restrictions on political activity by judges and judicial
18 candidates by amending the Code of Judicial Conduct; he also
19 established the Special Commission on the Administration of
20 Justice and the Illinois Family Violence Coordinating Council;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, Judge Miller had a lifelong interest in bioethics
23 and helped develop the medical-legal curriculum at Southern
24 Illinois University School of Medicine, where he served as an

1 adjunct professor in the Department of Medical Humanities for
2 several years; after retirement, he also served in an of
3 counsel capacity at the law firm Jenner & Block in Chicago for
4 many years; and

5 WHEREAS, Judge Miller was active in many community
6 organizations, including serving as president of the Greater
7 Springfield Chamber of Commerce and the Springfield Mental
8 Health Association, a board member of Sparc and the
9 Springfield-Sangamon County Youth Services Bureau, and a
10 member of the Illinois State Bar Association, the Sangamon
11 County Bar Association, and the Central Illinois Women's Bar
12 Association, where he became the association's first male
13 member; he also helped establish a center for battered women
14 in Springfield and provided legal advice to victims of
15 domestic abuse; from 1988 to 1991, he chaired the Illinois
16 Courts Commission, the constitutional body authorized to
17 discipline or suspend members of the judiciary; and

18 WHEREAS, Judge Miller received a number of accolades,
19 including being awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws from the
20 John Marshall Law School in 1991 and named to the Order of
21 Lincoln, the State's highest civilian honor, in 2019; he was
22 the namesake of the Justice Benjamin K. Miller Recognition
23 Award, which was established to honor outstanding members of
24 the community and the judiciary for their work in preventing

1 family violence; and

2 WHEREAS, Judge Miller was a world-class sailor, and he
3 enjoyed sailing his 37-foot sailboat, Adventure, throughout
4 the Caribbean and South America; and

5 WHEREAS, Judge Miller's impact on the law is both
6 significant and substantial; he wrote over 487 opinions,
7 participated in more than 2,000 cases, and evaluated over
8 20,000 requests for review; he will be remembered for serving
9 as a leader in court reform and ethics and as a tireless
10 advocate for victims of domestic abuse; and

11 WHEREAS, Judge Miller was preceded in death by his
12 parents, Clifford C. and Mary M. Miller; and

13 WHEREAS, Judge Miller is survived by his sister, Carol
14 Costello; his nephews, John Costello and David (Julie)
15 Costello; his niece, Katherine (Mark) Whitlock, and her sons,
16 Ben and Jack Whitlock; Jennifer A. Johnson; and many friends;
17 therefore, be it

18 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL
19 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
20 the Honorable Benjamin K. Miller, former Chief Justice of the
21 Supreme Court of Illinois, and extend our sincere condolences

1 to his family, friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be
2 it further

3 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
4 presented to the family of Judge Miller as an expression of our
5 deepest sympathy.