

1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the House of Representatives of
3 the State of Illinois are pleased to honor citizens of the
4 State who have contributed much throughout their lives; and

5 WHEREAS, Katherine Dunham was born in Joliet in 1909; she
6 is a dancer, an entertainer, and an educator; through hard
7 work and unbelievable dedication to her craft, she has
8 changed the face of modern dance and has changed many lives
9 as a result; and

10 WHEREAS, In the 1930s, Ms. Dunham taught ballet and
11 modern dance at the University of Chicago; she joined
12 Chicago's Federal Theatre Project in 1938 and composed her
13 ballet, L'Ag'Ya; while working on her master's degree in
14 anthropology, she made a trip to the Caribbean and Brazil,
15 where she encountered new dance movements and rhythms that
16 would influence her work; she later moved to New York City
17 and choreographed the Broadway hit Cabin in the Sky; and

18 WHEREAS, In 1939, she married John Pratt, a painter and
19 costume and set designer; they had one adopted daughter,
20 Martinique; and

21 WHEREAS, Ms. Dunham served as professor emeritus and
22 artist-in-residence at Southern Illinois University in
23 Edwardsville; she was the director of the East St. Louis
24 Performing Arts Center, which was later named the Katherine
25 Dunham Center for the Arts in her honor; she served as an
26 advisor at the State Department and as a lecturer in college
27 and university settings; and

28 WHEREAS, Ms. Dunham is a member of the Women's Honorable
29 Scientific Fraternity at the University of Chicago; she is a
30 member of the Royal Society of Anthropologists in London; in
31 1978, the Katherine Dunham museum was established in East St.

1 Louis, displaying costumes that she has worn in performances,
2 items from her travels, paintings, sculptures, and musical
3 instruments; and

4 WHEREAS, Katherine Dunham received the Albert Schweitzer
5 Music Award in 1979, the Kennedy Center Honors Award in 1983,
6 and honorary degrees from USV, Dartmouth, Howard University,
7 and Washington University; in 1986, she received the Scripps
8 American Dance Festivals Award; she has been inducted into
9 the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame; the building which houses
10 the departments of theater and dance, music, and mass
11 communications at the University of Illinois at Edwardsville
12 is named Katherine Dunham Hall in her honor; therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
14 NINETY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
15 we congratulate Katherine Dunham on the occasion of her 94th
16 birthday celebration on Sunday, June 22, 2003, and we thank
17 her for her outstanding contributions to the world of dance
18 and theater, and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That we recognize Katherine Dunham for her
20 groundbreaking work in the area of dance, especially for
21 opening doors for African-American dancers; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
23 presented to Ms. Katherine Dunham as an expression of our
24 respect and esteem.