



1

HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House are pleased to
3 honor Cleo Johnson, founder and director of Cleo Johnson's
4 School of Charm and Modeling Agency, and congratulate her on
5 her lifetime achievements; and

6 WHEREAS, In the 1950s professional modeling as a career was
7 extremely limited; upon graduating from the now defunct Academy
8 of Charm in 1951, Cleo Johnson found that opportunities for
9 black women, in particular, being trained as fashion models
10 were not the best; after personally experiencing the extreme
11 racial discrimination that period of history produced, Mrs.
12 Johnson felt that one day a door would open for women of all
13 races; she also had a strong desire to share the expert
14 knowledge she had acquired in the field of high fashion
15 modeling; and

16 WHEREAS, In 1956, Mrs. Johnson organized Cleo Johnson's
17 School of Charm and Modeling; the school's mission was to train
18 women and men to improve their appearance, attitude, and
19 behavior; the end result would make the difference between
20 success and failure; students were prepared to take command in
21 any situation, whether in the office, schoolroom, hospital, or
22 across the breakfast table; and

23 WHEREAS, During the past fifty years, Cleo Johnson has
24 provided a professional modeling program of high quality; in
25 addition, Mrs. Johnson has guided literally thousands of
26 individuals to successful professions other than modeling,
27 which has resulted in helping them succeed in today's market;
28 some of the school's past graduates include Gary Gray Jr. (cast
29 member of the original Bill Cosby television sitcom), the late
30 Minnie Riperton (top recording artist), Sherri "Peaches"
31 Brewer Bronfman (actress who appeared in the movie Shaft and
32 the musical Hello Dolly), and Cardiss Collins (former Illinois

1 Congresswoman); even though these individuals and many more
2 were groomed by Mrs. Johnson and achieved beyond the norm, Mrs.
3 Johnson excelled in motivating the average child and adult to
4 develop healthy self esteem; Mrs. Johnson deeply felt that if
5 an individual was not able to overcome low self esteem, it
6 could lead to introversion, withdrawal from normal life, and a
7 waste of one's potential; Mrs. Johnson never turned away anyone
8 who asked for her guidance; one example was a young lady who
9 was handicapped and totally relied on a wheelchair for her
10 mobility; she is now a past graduate; and

11 WHEREAS, Over the years, various business people have
12 offered Mrs. Johnson positions in their companies; she never
13 accepted; she stuck with her dream of helping others obtain
14 their dreams; not worried about fame or fortune, Mrs. Johnson
15 has held on to the power of faith, hope, and charity, which
16 have motivated her actions; as a result, Cleo Johnson's School
17 of Charm and Modeling Agency is the first and only black owned
18 and operated modeling school which has existed to serve the
19 community for the past fifty years; and

20 WHEREAS, Cleo Johnson has received numerous awards
21 attesting to her outstanding achievements, contributions, and
22 service, including, most recently: 1991, Founders' Award,
23 Modeling Association of America International; 1992, Career
24 Day Award; 1993, Salute to Our Youth Award; 1994, Charter
25 Member Award, Modeling Association of America International;
26 1995, In the News Award; 1996, Hirsch Metro High School
27 Partners in Education Award; 1996, Most Elegant Woman Around
28 Award, Harold Necklas, Chairman; 1996, Pioneer of the Year;
29 1996 and 1997, Woman of the Rock; 1998, The African American
30 Award; 1999, Forty Years of Service and Achievement Award,
31 Ethel Mae Hawkins; and 2005, Black On Black Love Award; and

32 WHEREAS, On Sunday, November 6, 2005, at 4:00 P.M., at the
33 Sabre Room, 3900 W. 95th Street, in Hickory Hills, Illinois,

1 the past graduates of the past fifty years of Cleo Johnson's
2 School of Charm and Modeling Agency will pay tribute to Cleo
3 Johnson, the school's founder and director; with this tribute,
4 Mrs. Johnson ("Chicago's First Lady of Fashion") will be
5 recognized for her pioneering spirit as a fashion icon,
6 leadership, accomplishments in the field of professional
7 modeling, locally and nationally, consummate teacher, and
8 dedicated support and service to Chicago's educational,
9 religious, and civic community; therefore, be it

10 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
11 NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
12 we honor Cleo Johnson, founder and director of Cleo Johnson's
13 School of Charm and Modeling Agency, and congratulate her on
14 her lifetime achievements; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
16 presented to Cleo Johnson as an expression of our respect,
17 admiration, and esteem.