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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 Merritt L. Hicks Jr. of Chicago, who passed away on April 29, 2010; and

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WHEREAS, Merritt Hicks Jr. was born on June 24, 1922 in New Orleans, Louisiana, to the union of Merritt L. Hicks Sr. and Mabel Washington; Mr. Hicks met the love of his life at Anderson High School in Austin, Texas; a few years later, they reconnected at a barn yard dance, and on April 17, 1944, Merritt and Bobbie Hicks were united in marriage; and

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WHEREAS, For the next 66 years of marriage, Merritt and Bobbie raised their family in Chicago; Mr. Hicks was also known as Mr. Geechie Hicks; shortly after graduation from high school, Mr. Hicks joined the United States Navy and played in the band until he was given an Honorary Discharge; during World War II, he returned to Austin, Texas after being drafted by the U.S. Army Air Force Band; Mr. Hicks was honorably discharged from the military in August of 1945; and

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WHEREAS, Mr. Hicks later developed his own local band, "Geechie Hicks and the Czars Band"; although his specialty was classical jazz, his band traveled around the Chicagoland area performing at various venues including; Italian and Jewish

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1 weddings, bar mitzvahs, and other special events playing polka,  
2 blues, and jazz; and

3 WHEREAS, Mr. Hicks wore his Stetson hats and developed his  
4 own 7 beat style; he played for Lionel Hampton, Louis  
5 Armstrong, BB King, and many more; he tap danced for Cab  
6 Calloway, Duke Ellington, and various other artists; and

7 WHEREAS, He was preceded in death by his parents; two  
8 sisters, Dorothy Eustace and Helen Childress; and one  
9 grandchild, Derrick; and

10 WHEREAS, Mr. Merritt Hicks Jr. is survived by his loving  
11 and devoted wife of 66 years, Mrs. Bobbie Hicks; his children,  
12 Merritt L. Hicks III (Veronica), Jacqueline, and Gwendolyn  
13 Hicks; his sisters, Audrey Villavaso and Aramenta Johnson; his  
14 six grandchildren, David, Darryl, Darren, Alain, Russell, and  
15 Natoya; his eight great-grandchildren; his three  
16 great-great-grandchildren; and his many nieces, nephews,  
17 relatives, and friends; therefore, be it

18 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-SIXTH GENERAL  
19 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn, along with  
20 his family and friends, the passing of Merritt Hicks Jr.; and  
21 be it further

1           RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
2 presented to the family of Merritt Hicks Jr. as a symbol of our  
3 sincere sympathy.