



SR2347

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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 Herb Kent, who passed away at the age of 88; and

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WHEREAS, Herb Kent was born on October 5, 1928 and was raised on Chicago's South Side, where he received early musical inspiration from the rhythm and blues clubs that dotted his neighborhood; he often stood outside the windows of these clubs listening to the tunes being played inside; and

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WHEREAS, As a young teen, Herb Kent became involved in drama workshops and studied classical music at Hyde Park High School; in 1944, at the age of 16, he hosted a classical music program for the prestigious WBEZ Radio station; and

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WHEREAS, Herb Kent hosted radio shows on several stations in Chicago; though each station had a platform and a format of its own, his style of humor, critique, and banter was immediately recognizable to his loyal listeners, no matter what station broadcast his shows; one of his most infamous stints was with WVON Radio between 1962 and 1970; many members of the broadcasting community have stated that he greatly helped to launch the careers of such R & B artists as The Temptations, Minnie Riperton, Curtis Mayfield, and Smokey Robinson because

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1 of his enthusiastic, on-air embrace of their music; and

2 WHEREAS, During his broadcast on WVON, Herb Kent became
3 widely known as the "Voice of the People" for Chicago's South
4 Side, the spokesperson for local African-Americans; he became
5 known widely as "Herb Kent, the Cool Gent", and even served as
6 producer for an R & B group named The Cool Gents; and

7 WHEREAS, Herb Kent was the recipient of many awards and
8 recognitions, including an induction into the Museum of
9 Broadcast Communications Radio Hall of Fame in 1995; in 1996,
10 he witnessed the official dedication of a street on Chicago's
11 South Side in his honor: "Herb Kent Drive"; he was also
12 recognized by the dedication of a United States postal stamp
13 bearing his image, which was included in the 1998 "Golden Days
14 of Radio" series, and was named the Honorary Mayor of
15 Bronzeville by the citizens of that South Side community the
16 following year; therefore, be it

17 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL
18 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we, along with his
19 family and friends, mourn the passing of Herb Kent; and be it
20 further

21 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
22 presented to the family of Herb Kent as an expression of our

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1 sympathy.