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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 William J. "Bill" Laskey of Crystal Lake, who passed away on June 8, 2018; and

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WHEREAS, Bill Laskey was born in Chicago to William Jennings and Gertrude Laskey on October 3, 1922; he loved music and began working professionally as a jazz saxophonist while still in high school; he served during World War II as a radio operator and was stationed in India; after the war, he studied at the Chicago Conservatory of Music, Roosevelt University, and the University of Illinois, earning degrees in clarinet performance and music education; and

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WHEREAS, Bill Laskey became a high school band director, teaching in Rossville and then at Crystal Lake Central High School, where he retired in 1980 after eventually being named as head of the music department; in the 1970s, he expanded and revamped the Crystal Lake marching band program to include summer competitions; under his leadership, the Heraldry Guard, with students from both Central and South High Schools, won numerous competitions and accolades for their marching, innovation, and musicianship; during his tenure, he taught beginning band, symphonic band, jazz band, marching band and music theory and appreciation; and

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1           WHEREAS, Following his retirement from teaching, Bill  
2 Laskey pursued many interests including photography, golf, and  
3 travel; at the age of 79, he took flying lessons and earned his  
4 pilot license; he remained immersed in music, conducting  
5 musicals at the Woodstock Opera House and recording several  
6 solo CDs that featured him playing jazz standards on the  
7 saxophone; and

8           WHEREAS, Bill Laskey was honored to have been chosen as the  
9 grand marshal for the 2015 Crystal Lake Independence Day  
10 Parade; in recent years, the Crystal Lake Strikers drumline  
11 established the William Laskey scholarship, which is awarded  
12 each year to aspiring percussion students; and

13           WHEREAS, Bill Laskey was preceded in death by his parents;  
14 his sister, Dorothy Smith; and his wife, Joanne; and

15           WHEREAS, Bill Laskey is survived by his children, Elizabeth  
16 (Bruce) Laskey, John (Liz) Laskey, Mary (Grant) Laskey, and  
17 James Laskey, and his dear companion, Betty Jean Stoltze;  
18 therefore, be it

19           RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDREDTH GENERAL  
20 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of  
21 William J. "Bill" Laskey, and extend our sincere condolences to

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

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