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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 Valda A. "Val" Camilletti of Cicero, who passed away on July 24, 2018 at the age of 78; and

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WHEREAS, Val Camilletti was born to Italian immigrants Norma Mary and Quinto Camilletti and spoke Italian before English; her father was a factory worker who came from Perugia, Italy on a boat named after the opera composer, Guiseppe Verdi; she grew up on the West Side of Chicago in the Austin neighborhood and graduated from Austin High School; she then moved to Oak Park before settling in Cicero; and

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WHEREAS, Three days after graduating from high school, Val Camilletti began her career at Continental Bank; in 1962, she accepted a job at Capitol Records and worked in their Chicago offices on Michigan Avenue; her duties included promoting records, working with radio stations, and organizing sock hops; in 1967, she moved to NMC Discount Records, where she managed various stores; when they went out of business in 1972, she took over the Oak Park shop on Ridgeland Avenue; the store eventually moved to 723 1/2 South Boulevard and became "Val's halla Records"; and

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WHEREAS, Val Camilletti described her store as "a unique

1 musical landscape" filled with thousands of 45s, LPs,
2 cassettes, and CDs in every conceivable music category; "Val's
3 halla" was the place to go for music lovers from all
4 generations and walks of life; her regular customers, including
5 the late actor John Mahoney of Oak Park, stayed loyal even
6 through the music industry's dramatic change to digital
7 technology; the store also included a shrine to Elvis for those
8 who felt the need to pay their respects; and

9 WHEREAS, Val Camilletti was involved in the folk scene in
10 the 1950s and early 1960s and was friends with American country
11 folk singers and songwriters John Prine and Steve Goodman; they
12 later visited her store and shared their latest music with her
13 and her patrons; her knowledge of music was encyclopedic and
14 ran the gamut from classical to folk, choral to hip hop to
15 opera and everything in between; her storytelling abilities
16 were wide ranging, which made frequenting her establishment
17 more than a shopping experience; and

18 WHEREAS, Throughout her nearly 46 years in business, Val
19 Camilletti shaped thousands of lives through her passion for
20 music; she was a great curator of music and promoter of
21 musicians, including those who lived in her neighborhood; her
22 enthusiasm for all things music and everything having to do
23 with community was infectious; she welcomed musicians,
24 especially high school students, to play in her shop; and

1 WHEREAS, Val Camilletti was lovingly referred to as the
2 community therapist and was known for her loyalty and magnetic
3 energy; she was someone people came to for advice or a shoulder
4 to cry on; she was simultaneously demanding, hilarious,
5 generous, passionate, charming, and boisterous; she had
6 lifelong customers and employees who saw her as a friend and
7 mentor, not a boss; she employed generations of kids who worked
8 their first jobs at "Val's halla" and became part of her
9 family; and

10 WHEREAS, Val Camilletti was in charge of the music during
11 the May Madness street fests on Oak Park Avenue during the
12 1990s and early 2000s; she emceed the Church of Beethoven
13 concerts at Open Door Theatre, spearheaded the annual
14 "hallaPalooza" sale and music fest, where many came in from
15 around the country to visit and volunteer, and penned a regular
16 entertainment column and blog for the "Wednesday Journal"; and

17 WHEREAS, In 2006, Val Camilletti moved "Val's halla" to 39
18 Harrison Street in the Oak Park Arts District; she was an arts
19 district champion and became a vital member and later vice
20 president of the Oak Park Arts District Business Association;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, Val Camilletti loved animals and was a huge

1 advocate for the Animal Care League for many years and emceed
2 their annual auction; she loved golf and played at Columbus
3 Park; she was also a morning regular at George's Restaurant in
4 Oak Park; she was among the most recognized faces in Oak Park
5 and was an institution and vibrant presence in the village for
6 nearly 50 years; and

7 WHEREAS, Val Camilletti was preceded in death by her white
8 German Shepherd, Halla; her yellow Lab mix, Loki; and her cat,
9 Woden; her record store was, for many years, the daytime lounge
10 for her Norse-named pals; and

11 WHEREAS, Val Camilletti is survived by her cat, Soot; and
12 her many friends who miss her terribly and declare she will
13 never be forgotten; therefore, be it

14 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDREDTH GENERAL
15 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
16 Valda A. "Val" Camilletti and extend our sincere condolences to
17 her family, friends, and all who knew and loved her; and be it
18 further

19 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
20 presented to the family of Val Camilletti as an expression of
21 our deepest sympathy.