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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives are saddened to learn of the death of Minnie Alford, who passed away on March 15, 2018; and

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WHEREAS, Minnie Alford was born in Little Rock, Arkansas on May 1, 1915; she was a matriarch, a master seamstress, and, for over 40 years, the first lady of the Maywood Church of God in Christ (COGIC); she was in her mid 20s when her husband was appointed pastor of the church that became a community institution and a driving force in the evolution of Chicago Gospel music; and

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WHEREAS, Minnie Alford treated the house of worship like her own home and stitched its drapes and chair covers with the same punctiliousness she put into making her family's clothes or laboring in an Oak Park home as a housekeeper; when the church needed to purchase its first organ, she sold baked goods alongside her "cooking buddy," Vera Grace; and

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WHEREAS, Minnie Alford was a member of the church's Senior Choir, which was organized in 1948, the year of its first live radio broadcast; she wrote and sang lead solo on many of the choir's recordings; in the 1950s the choir began broadcasting live on Sunday evenings; eventually a daily broadcast, "The

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1 Life-Giving Word," was also carried on radio stations; in 1969,
2 the choir recorded its first 45 RPM, which was the beginning of
3 many recordings that solidified its reputation for versatility
4 and vocal disciplines; the choir eventually became known as the
5 Progressive Radio Choir and was signed to Gospel record labels,
6 won awards, and toured nationally and internationally;
7 throughout the choir's success, she functioned as its de facto
8 business manager and coordinated the choir's many tours, made
9 hotel and flight arrangements, and offered a steady source of
10 support for its members; and

11 WHEREAS, Minnie Alford planned resourcefully; each year
12 she made calendars for choir members from Christmas wrapping
13 paper; she had an innate ability to salvage life from whatever
14 material was at hand; and

15 WHEREAS, Minnie Alford is survived by her three sons; her
16 11 grandchildren; her many great-grandchildren; and her
17 extended family and friends; therefore, be it

18 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
19 HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
20 mourn the passing of Minnie Alford and extend our sincere
21 condolences to her family, friends, and all who knew and loved
22 her; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
2 presented to the family of Minnie Alford as an expression of
3 our deepest sympathy.