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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 Willie Thomas Summerville of Champaign, who passed away on March 7, 2017; and

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WHEREAS, Willie Summerville was born in Sunshine Arkansas to Moses and Lenora on August 7, 1944; he started taking music lessons when he was 12 to 13 years of age; he was a drum major at T.W. Daniels High School and played the tuba in the band; he was on the student council and sang in the school choir; and

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WHEREAS, Willie Summerville graduated from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff in 1966 with a Bachelor of Science in Music Education; he earned his Masters of Science in Music Education from the University of Illinois in 1967; he furthered his studies at the University of Utah, the Ohio State University, Youngstown State University, East Stroudsburg State University, Westminster Choir College, the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, and Jackson State University; and

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WHEREAS, Willie Summerville worked at the Champaign Public Schools until 1970, when he became the Choral Music Director of the Middle School and the Eighth Grade Chorus in the Urbana Unified Schools; he was the Director of the High School Concert

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1 Choir and took the choir to Rome to sing at St. Peter's
2 Basilica at the Vatican in 1999; he took the Urbana High School
3 choir to New York City where they sang at the Riverside Church
4 and at Carnegie Hall; he also worked in the African American
5 Studies Department at the University of Illinois, where he was
6 the Campus and Community Affairs Specialist; and

7 WHEREAS, Willie Summerville belonged to many professional
8 associations and service organizations, including the National
9 Education Association, the Illinois Education Association, the
10 Urbana Education Association, the Urbana Rotary, the
11 University of Illinois Alumni Band, the Phi Beta Sigma
12 Fraternity, the Phi Delta Kappa, the Alpha Kappa Mu National
13 Honor Society, the University of Illinois Alumni Association
14 (Life Member), the American Choral Directors Association, the
15 Illinois Music Educators Association, the Music Educators
16 National Conference, and the Illinois Music Adjudicators
17 Association; and

18 WHEREAS, Willie Summerville was a founding member of Canaan
19 Missionary Baptist Church; he was a charter member of the
20 Deacon Board and Treasurer of the Canaan Development Foundation
21 that supports the Canaan Academy; he faithfully served with the
22 Soul Winning Action Team (SWAT Team) where he was a charter
23 member; he was the director of the St. Luke's choir for over 50
24 years; he also conducted music workshops and clinics all over

1 the world which were attended by thousands of people; he won
2 numerous awards for his music and for his teaching; and

3 WHEREAS, Willie Summerville had many personal editorial
4 and musical publications such as, "Choral Clarification,"
5 "Jesus, How I love You," "Keeping the Dream Alive," "Dear Old
6 Urbana," and "The Chocolate Flavored Birthday Song"; and

7 WHEREAS, Willie Summerville was married to the former
8 Valerian Alexander for 47 years; and

9 WHEREAS, Willie Summerville was preceded in death by his
10 sisters Ruby Lee Summerville Dixon, Sarah Jean Patton Brown,
11 and Annie Pearl Summerville; and

12 WHEREAS, Willie Summerville is survived by his sister,
13 Bertha Sue Summerville; his children, Derrick, Shandra, and
14 William (Danielle Moses); his grandchildren, Darius (Jazmine),
15 Adrian, Makeda, Jaxon, and Ezekiel; his great-granddaughter,
16 Amiyah; his unborn great-grandson, Sebastian; and many nieces,
17 nephews, and godchildren; therefore, be it

18 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDREDTH GENERAL
19 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
20 Willie Thomas Summerville, and extend our sincere condolences
21 to his family, friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be

1 it further

2 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
3 presented to the family of Willie Summerville as an expression
4 of our deepest sympathy.