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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 Ken Gunji of Champaign, who passed away on September 30, 2017; and

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WHEREAS, Ken Gunji was born in Los Angeles on May 25, 1934; he moved to Japan with his parents when they decided to return prior to December 7, 1941; he later returned to the United States and lived in Chicago, where he attended high school; he was the first Japanese-American in Chicago to achieve the rank of Eagle Scout; he earned both his bachelor and master's degrees at the University of Illinois; he began a one-year pen-pal correspondence with Kimiko; her letters drew him back to Japan, and within two weeks of meeting, they married; and

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WHEREAS, Ken Gunji was commissioned and served two years on active duty with the United States Army and retired 25 years later from the Illinois National Guard with the rank of lieutenant colonel; after active duty, he worked in Student Services for the University of Illinois and Parkland College for 32 years; and

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WHEREAS, Ken Gunji was a member of the Champaign Rotary; he served as sergeant-at-arms, secretary, and board member before serving as World's Greatest Rotary Club President; he was the

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1 second Champaign Rotarian to receive the Rotary Foundation's
2 Citation for Meritorious Service; he was elected as district
3 governor and led the district, visited every club in the
4 district, and still remained active in World's Greatest Rotary;
5 he then served as District 6490's delegate to the Rotary
6 International Institute and later as zone coordinator for the
7 World Community Service Task Force for Rotary International;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, Ken Gunji was a volunteer leader for the Boy
10 Scouts of America and served as President of the Prairielands
11 Council and as area vice president; he participated in camp
12 inspections at Camp Drake; he was a recipient of the Silver
13 Beaver Award from the local Boy Scouts of America Council and
14 was later presented the Silver Antelope Award by the National
15 Council of Boy Scouts of America; and

16 WHEREAS, Ken Gunji was a longtime baseball coach for the
17 Babe Ruth Youth League; he served on the Chanute Aerospace
18 Museum Foundation, Champaign Public Library Foundation, Crime
19 Stoppers, Salvation Army Board, and many other local
20 organizations; and

21 WHEREAS, Ken Gunji loved socializing with friends and
22 family; he was an avid fan of the Chicago Cubs and faithful
23 supporter of the Fighting Illini; he delighted in the Peanuts

1 comic strip and had a soft spot for Snoopy; and

2 WHEREAS, Ken Gunji carried true civic responsibility with
3 great integrity; he was a beloved husband, father, grandfather,
4 and friend; and

5 WHEREAS, Ken Gunji is survived by his wife, Kimiko; his
6 daughters, Tricia (Robert) Ballsrud and Jennifer (Jeff)
7 Rinaldo; and his granddaughter, Mika; therefore, be it

8 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDREDTH GENERAL
9 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
10 Ken Gunji, and extend our sincere condolences to his family,
11 friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
13 presented to the family of Ken Gunji as an expression of our
14 deepest sympathy.