



SR1199

LRB100 16453 MST 31582 r

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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 Charlene F. Bennett of Gibson City, who passed away on November 8, 2017; and

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WHEREAS, Charlene Bennett was born in Gibson City on July 16, 1922 to Oliver F. and Emma (Gilmore) Shirley, two of the first land-owning families of Ford County; she was educated at the one-room Pleasant Valley School near her family's farm in rural Gibson City; she graduated in 1940 as valedictorian from Drummer Township High School in Gibson City; she earned her teaching certificate from Illinois State Normal University; and

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WHEREAS, Charlene Bennett taught for seven years at the one-room Wantwood Country School south of Gibson City for the starting salary of \$90 per month until she left to raise her own family; she married Leonard L. Bennett on November 26, 1947 in Danville and together they had five children; and

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WHEREAS, Charlene Bennett was a lifelong teacher of children and returned to education, spending seven years as a teaching assistant at the Gibson City Grade School; she then worked for many years as an aide at the Busy Hands Nursery School in Gibson City; and

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1           WHEREAS, Charlene Bennett was a devoted mother,  
2 grandmother, and great-grandmother whose greatest joy was  
3 doting on, and spending time with, her family; and

4           WHEREAS, Charlene Bennett was a faithful and active member  
5 of the First Christian Church of Gibson City for over 70 years,  
6 serving as a long-time Sunday School teacher and the pianist  
7 for the Children's Choir, in addition to volunteering for the  
8 church in many other capacities; and

9           WHEREAS, Charlene Bennett was a dutiful gardener on her  
10 family's farm northwest of Gibson City and was proud of her  
11 flowers, sweet corn, tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, onions,  
12 green beans, and assorted other vegetables; she would often  
13 include her garden's bounty in her home-cooked meals of simple  
14 country recipes that were greatly enjoyed by her family; and

15           WHEREAS, Charlene Bennett loved to play the piano and  
16 ensured that music would play a defining role in the lives of  
17 her children; she enjoyed listening to her growing family sing  
18 together at church or around a piano during family gatherings;  
19 and

20           WHEREAS, Charlene Bennett spent nearly all of her 95 years  
21 within a few square miles in Ford County, as she was born,

1 lived, and died in and around her beloved Gibson City;  
2 nonetheless, the pain of her loss extends far from the modest  
3 boundaries of Ford County; she touched the lives of countless  
4 people; and

5 WHEREAS, Charlene Bennett was preceded in death by her  
6 parents and her only sibling, Robert E. Shirley; and

7 WHEREAS, Charlene Bennett is survived by her sons, Bob  
8 (Barb) Bennett, Tom (Kathy) Bennett, and Doug (Sheila) Bennett;  
9 her daughters, Wanda Driscoll and Carol (Jerry)  
10 Bennett-Barker; 15 grandchildren; and 15 great-grandchildren;  
11 therefore, be it

12 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDREDTH GENERAL  
13 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of  
14 Charlene F. Bennett, and extend our sincere condolences to her  
15 family, friends, and all who knew and loved her; and be it  
16 further

17 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
18 presented to the family of Charlene Bennett as an expression of  
19 our deepest sympathy.