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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 Dr. Marcellus J. Leonard of Springfield, who passed away on August 3, 2018; and

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WHEREAS, Pastor Leonard was born in Chicago to Julia Mae and raised by her husband, Lonnie Leonard; he married Barbara Bolden in 1960, and she preceded him in death; after many years in retail management, he was inspired to return to college and complete his bachelor's degree; he earned both his bachelor's degree and master's degree from Chicago State University, where he graduated cum laude; he later earned his Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Illinois; in 1997, he married his longtime friend and companion, Elizabeth Regulas; and

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WHEREAS, Pastor Leonard taught poetry, playwriting, and became known as the Poet Professor; he believed that the most effective academic learning environment was the open classroom, where teachers maintain control and the students' cultural and personal perspectives are encouraged as a means to teach them in the cultural context; he was an associate pastor at Calvary Baptist Church, where he also participated in the choir; he was later given the opportunity to serve at Heritage Free Will Baptist Church as the pastor, a job he dove into with excitement and anticipation; and

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1 WHEREAS, Pastor Leonard often spoke at churches, prisons,
2 and for civic groups; he was a founding member of The Poets and
3 Writers Literary Forum of Springfield, where he mentored
4 Central Illinois poets; he was known for his satin voice and
5 graceful readings, which were often accompanied by jazz,
6 including his son playing saxophone; and

7 WHEREAS, Pastor Leonard was a poet, writer, and lover of
8 the performing arts; he enjoyed traveling and relaxing at home
9 with Liz, planting his flower gardens, inviting friends over
10 for dinner and conversation, worshiping, praying, and
11 studying; he was one of the most generous people and gave
12 selflessly of his time and resources to make someone else's
13 burden a little less heavy; and

14 WHEREAS, Pastor Leonard was preceded in death by his
15 parents; his brother, Clarence (Moon); and his sisters,
16 Frances, Jacqueline (Big Jacque), and Bernice; and

17 WHEREAS, Pastor Leonard is survived by his wife, Elizabeth;
18 his children, Traysee (Mayme), La'-Trice Anderson, and Terry
19 (Colin) Pinkney; his stepsons, Anthony (Barbara) and Andre
20 Person; his brother-in-law, Matt (Vicki) Christmon; his
21 grandchildren, Alex Bryson, Eryn (Gerard) Hazelton, Ja'slyn
22 Anderson, Jazmine Leonard, Alyx Reid, Jessica Anderson,

1 d'Artagnan Landing, (Johnathan) John Anderson IV, Isaac
2 Pinkney, Joshua Anderson, Jadah Pinkney, Joy Anderson, John
3 Pinkney, and Jireh Pinkney; his stepgrandsons, Charles III and
4 Christopher Buckley; his step-great-grandchildren, Samia,
5 Kameron, and Tamira Buckley; his sister, Shirley Carter; his
6 cousin, Phyliss Echols; his nieces and nephews, Gwen, Wallace,
7 Jeanette, Jackie (Bae Bae), Dana, Von, Keli, and LaSharon; his
8 pastor, Silas Johnson; his church family at Heritage Church;
9 and The Fabulous Five, Paula Irby, Richard Green, George
10 Vaughn, Brian Jackson, and Larry Wedding; therefore, be it

11 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDREDTH GENERAL
12 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
13 Dr. Marcellus J. Leonard and extend our sincere condolences to
14 his family, friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be it
15 further

16 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
17 presented to the family of Pastor Leonard as an expression of
18 our deepest sympathy.