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1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives were saddened to learn of the death of Emilia
4 Pontarelli, who passed away on April 10, 2020 due to
5 complications from the new coronavirus; and

6 WHEREAS, Emilia Pontarelli was born in Rocchetta a
7 Volturmo, Italy on March 22, 1927, the second of eight
8 children; she grew up Emilia Neri in the province of Isernia;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, As a girl growing up in Italy, Emilia Pontarelli
11 herded animals, goats, and sheep by herself, taking them up and
12 down the mountain, running circles around everyone; and

13 WHEREAS, When the Germans occupied Emilia Pontarelli's
14 town, they commandeered the Neri home as well as other
15 families' homes in the village; on one occasion during this
16 time when she was still a youth, she was held back by family
17 members after confronting a German soldier who had confiscated
18 her pet goat for dinner; and

19 WHEREAS, When the Nazis' bombing began, Emilia Pontarelli
20 joined the local residents and sought refuge in caves in the
21 mountains where they had to stay quiet to survive; and

1 WHEREAS, Emilia Pontarelli married Vincenzo Pontarelli,
2 and they started their family; in 1967, they immigrated to
3 Chicago in search of more opportunities for their three
4 children, Tony, Maria, and Anna; and

5 WHEREAS, Even though Emilia Pontarelli moved to Chicago,
6 she never indulged in a hot dog throughout her entire life
7 because the Germans would eat them out of tin cans during the
8 occupation; and

9 WHEREAS, Emilia Pontarelli's son, Tony, opened a deli in
10 1978, which was then purchased by his sister, Maria, and her
11 husband, Vito, in 1980; Emilia could often be found stationed
12 behind the cash register, which she began operating in the
13 1980s; and

14 WHEREAS, Because of Emilia Pontarelli's vibrant
15 personality and cooking skills, the deli became a cornerstone
16 in the northwest side Italian-American community known as
17 Edison Park; and

18 WHEREAS, In her 90s, Emilia Pontarelli challenged her
19 son-in-law to arm wrestle to show she still had the strength
20 that had enabled her to climb the mountains in her hometown of
21 Rocchetta a Volturno; and

1 WHEREAS, Emilia Pontarelli was preceded in death by her
2 husband, Vincenzo; her daughter, Anna; her grandson, Freddie;
3 her brother, Cori; and her sister, Gina; and

4 WHEREAS, Emilia Pontarelli is survived by her children,
5 Tony and Maria; her sister, Amalia; her brothers, Michael,
6 Antonio, Giovanni, and Pasquale; eight grandchildren; and 14
7 great-grandchildren; and

8 WHEREAS, The surviving siblings, children, grandchildren,
9 and great-grandchildren of Emilia Pontarelli can be proud of
10 the legacy and lasting impact their mother, sister,
11 grandmother, and great-grandmother had on the community that
12 dined in her daughter's deli; therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
14 HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
15 we mourn the passing of Emilia Pontarelli and extend our
16 sincere condolences to her family, friends, and all who knew
17 and loved her; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
19 presented to the family of Emilia Pontarelli and Tony's Italian
20 Deli as an expression of our deepest sympathy and in
21 appreciation for her devotion to her community.