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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 Wilburn Edward "Webbs" Norman of Rockford, who passed away on January 19, 2019; and

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WHEREAS, Webbs Norman was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee to David and Beulah Norman on March 16, 1933; his family moved to Central Illinois during his early years, and he was raised on a farm southwest of Rockford near Morrison; he graduated from Morrison High School in 1952; he attended the University of Illinois, where he earned a bachelor's degree in education in 1957 and a master's degree in parks and recreation administration in 1960; and

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WHEREAS, Webbs Norman began his career with the Rockford Park District as a seasonal employee working at playground programs in 1955; in 1972, he was hired as the executive director of the park district, and he embraced his role as public servant and quickly became a highly-respected leader; he cared deeply for patrons and employees, as well as the Entire Rockford region; he led the development of many of the city's biggest recreational projects, including the Riverview Ice House, Forest City Queen and Trolley, Sportscore, Magic Waters, Aldeen Golf Club, Carlson Ice Arena Sapura Playworld, and the city's beloved bike path; under his leadership, the Park

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1 District became a nationally recognized park system and was
2 first awarded the prestigious national Gold Medal in parks and
3 recreation management in 1989; the Park District's expansion
4 and positive reputation in the community resulted from his
5 ability to build trust and encourage people to become involved;
6 he believed that the government's role was to fill needs and
7 solve problems; he loved being a connector and delighted in
8 bringing local and state agencies together to benefit the
9 community; he retired in 2006; and

10 WHEREAS, After his retirement, Webbs Norman co-chaired the
11 fundraising effort to build Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens on
12 the Rock River; he also wrote Building a Lasting Dream: A
13 History of the Rockford Park District 1909-2009; he was also
14 widely known for holding court at a variety of restaurants in
15 the community, and many people went to see him for life advice
16 and inspiration; his personal philosophy was that no person was
17 more important than anyone else, and he taught others the value
18 of believing in people; and

19 WHEREAS, Webbs Norman was a longtime member of Zion
20 Lutheran Church, where he worked the sound booth, served on
21 committees, and regularly attended Sunday services; he also
22 enjoyed serving as a member of the Loves Park Civil Service
23 Commission; he was devoted to his family and enjoyed spending
24 time with his wife, children, grandchildren, and extended

1 family members; a formidable and highly-competitive croquet
2 player, he was often the victor of many backyard games; he
3 viewed his family as his greatest legacy; and

4 WHEREAS, Webbs Norman was preceded in death by his parents;
5 his brothers, Ralph, Kenny, and Dave; his son, Charlie; and his
6 daughter, Kathy; and

7 WHEREAS, Webbs Norman is survived by his wife, Mary; his
8 children, Dan (Maureen) and Patricia; and his stepson, Aaron
9 (Jill) Dinges; his grandchildren, Katy, Ellie, and Abe; and his
10 many nieces and nephews; therefore, be it

11 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL
12 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
13 Wilburn Edward "Webbs" Norman and extend our sincere
14 condolences to his family, friends, and all who knew and loved
15 him; and be it further

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