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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 Robert Birney, who passed away on September 25, 2018 at the age of 77; and

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WHEREAS, Robert Birney was born in Freeport, Ohio on October 19, 1940; he helped his father run the family's ancestral farm that grew into a large-scale turkey ranch; during these early years, he developed the remarkable ability to fix anything and everything, a skill that made him the "just ask Bob" resource for his neighbors and friends; he graduated from Kent State University with a degree in journalism in 1962; during college, he served as the vice president of the student council for three years, president of the interfraternity council, and chair of the student faculty union; he also worked part-time as a reporter and photographer at the university and for several area newspapers; he then received a graduate assistantship and continued his education at the University of Vermont, where he studied political science; and

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WHEREAS, Robert Birney held a full-time position in institutional research at the University of Vermont; he then accepted a position at SUNY Albany, New York, where he launched his lifelong career in designing computer-based information systems; he held leadership positions at DePaul University,

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1 American Hospital Supply-Baxter International, and Phillip
2 Morris-Kraft Inc.; he was also a consultant for Deloitte &
3 Touche, where he managed a broad range of corporate and
4 government engagements, both locally and nationally; and

5 WHEREAS, Robert Birney served in the National Guard and met
6 his wife, Hilda, while in New York; they married in 1969 and
7 moved to Oak Park in 1972; they bought an E.E. Roberts house
8 surrounded by gardens that they developed over the years; after
9 retirement, he became more engaged with his gardens; he created
10 a large koi pond that was featured one year on the annual Oak
11 Park and River Forest Garden Walk; he later converted it to an
12 eco-friendly water retention reservoir; when a 100-year-old
13 elm tree in his back yard died, he created a 12'x12' pergola to
14 provide shaded seating; and

15 WHEREAS, Robert Birney enjoyed traveling, was an avid
16 reader, a news follower, especially the New York Times, and a
17 stock trader; feeding his lifelong thirst for knowledge and
18 insatiable inquisitiveness in how things worked, he was a
19 relentless collector of hand tools and found objects that he
20 restored or repurposed; and

21 WHEREAS, Engaging and entertaining, Robert Birney was a
22 humorous storyteller; those who loved him will fondly remember
23 the time at a local seafaring restaurant across the street from

1 Nantasket Beach; his wit and delight made the evening a special
2 party for all; and

3 WHEREAS, Robert Birney is survived by his wife, Hilda, and
4 his brother, Stanley; therefore, be it

5 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL
6 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
7 Robert Birney and extend our sincere condolences to his family,
8 friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
10 presented to the family of Robert Birney as an expression of
11 our deepest sympathy.