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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 Arnetha Gholston of Chicago, who passed away on February 14, 2019; and

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WHEREAS, Arnetha Gholston was born on July 15, 1958; she was raised in rural Alabama and on Chicago's West Side; her first teacher and mentor was her mother, Amanda Gholston, who instilled in her the tenets of hard work, religion, family values, and taking care of those in need in the neighborhood; she was educated in the Chicago public schools; she earned her certification as a paralegal from Roosevelt University and her associate's degree from Kennedy-King Jr. College; she graduated from the Illinois Metropolitan School of Business; she earned her recreational pilot license from Griffin Aviation School of Flying and also had her real estate license, loan officer license, and State of Illinois Food Handlers Sanitation License; she was a first aid mental health specialist and received a certification for working with veterans with PTSD through the National Alliance on Mental Illnesses (NAMI); and

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WHEREAS, Arnetha Gholston began working in the family real estate business at a young age, where she learned the value of owning property; with a partner, she opened a floor maintenance service company and hired many of the people from her

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1 neighborhood; she opened a business incubator, offering
2 mentoring and space for people interested in developing their
3 businesses; and

4 WHEREAS, Arnetha Gholston became interested in the plight
5 of veterans after meeting her husband and partner, Daniel B.
6 Habeel, a devoted Muslim and disabled veteran; she worked with
7 him to develop the Muslim American Veteran Association (MAVA)
8 and the Auxiliary of the organization, where she became the
9 first National Auxiliary Commander; and

10 WHEREAS, Arnetha Gholston was the Executive Director and
11 co-founder of the RTW Veteran Center, where she worked
12 alongside her husband; the veteran center was labeled the
13 "Miracle of 55th Street" by one reporter, and as she continued
14 her work, she became known as the "Mother Theresa of 55th
15 Street"; one of the center's most popular programs was the soup
16 kitchen, known as "Ms. Arnetha's Kitchen," where she worked as
17 many as 15 hours a day, seven days a week, preparing meals,
18 serving homeless veterans and others breakfast, lunch, and
19 dinner; during her time at the center, she served over 300,000
20 meals; and

21 WHEREAS, As a community activist, Arnetha Gholston
22 belonged to many organizations and received awards and honors
23 from a variety of groups, including the Muslim community; she

1 was invited to participate and to speak at many different
2 events and institutions, including the United Nations; and

3 WHEREAS, Arnetha Gholston was a devoted mother to her two
4 children and embraced and loved all six of her husband's
5 children; she was a grandmother to nine grandchildren;
6 therefore, be it

7 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL
8 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
9 Arnetha Gholston and extend our sincere condolences to her
10 family, friends, and all who knew and loved her; and be it
11 further

12 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
13 presented to the family of Arnetha Gholston as an expression of
14 our deepest sympathy.