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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives are saddened to learn of the death of Dr. John
4 Walter Smith Jr., who passed away on January 8, 2022; and

5 WHEREAS, Dr. Smith was born in Chicago to John Walter Sr.
6 and Theresa Smith on July 19, 1937; he attended A.O. Sexton
7 Elementary School and Dunbar Vocational School, where he
8 excelled in athletics and academics; in 1954, he enlisted in
9 the U.S. Air Force and earned a medal for good conduct in 1957;
10 after his honorable discharge, he attended Chicago Teachers'
11 College (Chicago State University) and then Northern Illinois
12 University, where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Physical
13 Education; he was a standout on the Huskie football team and
14 was named College Academic All-American for the 1962 season;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, Dr. Smith began a 40-year career in education
17 with Chicago Public Schools in 1963, when he accepted a
18 position as a physical education teacher at Harlan High
19 School, where he also served as an assistant football coach;
20 he earned a master's degree in Education from Indiana
21 University and a doctorate in Philosophy of Education
22 Administration from the University of Illinois Chicago; his
23 CPS career included establishing and building football

1 programs at Kenwood and Percy L. Julian High School, serving
2 as athletic director and physical education chair, and
3 becoming an administrator with the Department of Sports
4 Administration and principal of Adam Clayton Powell Elementary
5 School; he retired from the Chicago Public Schools as the
6 executive director of the Department of Sports Administration
7 and Facilities Management in 2003; after retirement, he
8 continued to consult with public school districts on creating
9 and managing athletic programs and was instrumental in
10 assisting the Philadelphia Public School District pattern
11 their athletic program after the Chicago model; and

12 WHEREAS, Dr. Smith coached football and track and field at
13 Harlan High School starting in 1963 but also established
14 programs in these sports at the newly opened Kenwood High
15 School; in 1975, he began a program at Percy L. Julian High
16 School, and after two years, it was promoted to the "Red" top
17 division in the Chicago Public League and became a Public
18 League dynasty for the next 12 years; they won a Blue-Green
19 championship and seven Public League championships in that
20 span of time, including two Prep Bowl championships versus the
21 Chicago Catholic League; the 1979 Prep Bowl triumph over
22 Joliet Catholic High School was a landmark victory and only
23 the second Public League victory in 20 years; the victorious
24 1989 Prep Bowl team set the record for the most points in a
25 game; the Orange and Brown produced a significant number of

1 all-Public League selections, all-state honorees, major
2 college players, and seven individual NFL alumni; and

3 WHEREAS, Upon retiring as a teacher and coach, Dr. Smith
4 assumed the position as the football coordinator for the
5 Chicago Public Schools Department of Sports Administration; he
6 later became the executive director of and ushered in sweeping
7 changes to the interscholastic programs; during his tenure as
8 executive director, he doubled the number of paid coaches
9 available per sport, helped institute a no pass-no play policy
10 for athletic eligibility, clarified and enforced student
11 transfer rules, and realigned sports conferences with equity
12 according to competitive levels; he also re-instituted the
13 indoor track and field program, established freshmen levels of
14 competition, and implemented summer sports camps; lacrosse,
15 16-inch softball, golf, water polo, and elementary double
16 dutch were also added to the program of sports offerings; he is
17 credited with organizing and implementing the first structured
18 sports program for elementary schools, which covered 14 sports
19 including tackle football; the eight years of his progressive
20 and ingenious leadership at Chicago Schools Sports resulted in
21 increased student participation in athletics and laid the
22 foundation for more competitive programs; his leadership
23 included ensuring the welfare of all stakeholders, from
24 student-athletes to the community at large; his vision of fun,
25 safe, and engaged sport competitions led him to initiate the

1 "Orange Jackets" CPS Sports Security; and

2 WHEREAS, Dr. Smith was awarded the Chicago Public League
3 Coach of the Year five times, Operation PUSH Coach of the Year,
4 Coca-Cola Man of the Year, and a National Football Foundation
5 and a Hall of Fame Distinguished American Award; he was
6 inducted into the Illinois High School Football Coaches
7 Association Hall of Fame; and

8 WHEREAS, Dr. Smith married the love of his life, Deborah
9 Carter, in 2002, and they enjoyed world-wide travels and
10 adventure; as a father and scholar, he imparted the importance
11 of education not only to his children but as a father-figure to
12 a host of students, as well; and

13 WHEREAS, Dr. Smith was a proud lifetime member of Kappa
14 Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc. Chicago Alumni Chapter, serving as
15 the Polemarch from 1991 to 1992; he was also a member of the
16 National Alliance of Black Public School Administrators,
17 Operation PUSH, the Chicago Urban League, and the Chicago
18 Principals and Administrators Association; he was an avid
19 scuba diver and skier and a member of the Chicago Sno-Gophers
20 Ski Club; later in life, he was active in the Slow Breakers;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, Dr. Smith is survived by his wife of 18 years,

1 Deborah; his children, Ginger Bryant, Sheila Morris, Thomas
2 (Andria) Smith, and Kelli (Curtis) Smith-Cureton; his
3 stepchildren, Brandy (George) McCoy, Mandy Newman, and ONeal
4 Carter; his grandchildren, Timothy Bryant Jr., Tinger Bryant,
5 Kimberly Porter, Staci Morris, and Ariana Smith; his
6 great-grandchildren, Kadon Martin and Iverson Bryant; his
7 siblings, Carol Edwards, Michael (Zella) Smith, and Robin
8 Smith; his nieces and nephews, Deseray (Nathan) Moore, Derick
9 Johnson, Leonard Edwards, Eron Smith, Brandon (Meah) Smith,
10 and Danielle Smith (Wesley Pepper); and an extended family of
11 players and coaches, numerous dear friends, appreciative
12 students, and respected colleagues; therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
14 HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
15 we mourn the passing of Dr. John Walter Smith Jr. and extend
16 our sincere condolences to his family, friends, and all who
17 knew and loved him; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
19 presented to the family of Dr. Smith as an expression of our
20 deepest sympathy.