



SR0744

LRB102 23943 MST 33144 r

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SENATE RESOLUTION

2           WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate are saddened  
3 to learn of the death of George Finley Veenstra of  
4 Springfield, who passed away on November 11, 2021; and

5           WHEREAS, George Veenstra was born in Chicago to William  
6 and Ruth (McNaughton) Veenstra on January 13, 1944; he  
7 contracted polio at age 5 and relied on leg braces to walk for  
8 the rest of his life; he graduated from Morgan Park High School  
9 in 1961 and earned a teaching degree from the University of  
10 Illinois in 1966; and

11           WHEREAS, George Veenstra worked in the Springfield School  
12 District for more than 30 years, teaching mathematics and  
13 later computer classes, mostly at Washington Middle School,  
14 before retiring in 2000; he was an enthusiastic teacher who  
15 drew parents' praise for helping students who usually  
16 struggled with math; and

17           WHEREAS, George Veenstra became an ardent fan of the  
18 Fighting Illini and discovered his own athletic abilities  
19 while in college; from 1962 to 1971, he played intramural  
20 wheelchair football at Illinois and was quarterback for the  
21 Gold Team, leading the team to five championships; in 1964, he  
22 was a member of the United States Paralympic team in archery

1 and table tennis at Tokyo; during this same time, he  
2 participated in swimming, archery (Silver Medal) and table  
3 tennis (Bronze Medal) at the National Wheelchair Games; in  
4 1980, he won Gold Medals in the 50-meter butterfly and 400  
5 freestyle swimming events and Silver Medals in the 100 free  
6 and 200 individual medleys at the National Wheelchair games;  
7 and

8 WHEREAS, George Veenstra played point guard for the  
9 Champaign Urbana Black Knights wheelchair basketball team from  
10 1967 to 1971; he was named the National Tournament Most  
11 Valuable Player in 1970; he helped form the Springfield Spoke  
12 Jockeys, coaching and playing for that team until 1989; he was  
13 a member of eight All-Midwest Conference teams, four  
14 all-sectional teams, and two all-national tournament teams; he  
15 was an assistant coach for three USA international wheelchair  
16 basketball teams that won Gold Medals at international  
17 competitions; he was inducted into the Wheelchair Hall of Fame  
18 in 1988 and the Springfield Sports Hall of Fame in 2003; and

19 WHEREAS, George Veenstra threw his competitive spirit into  
20 playing with the Bridge Club of Springfield after retirement;  
21 he achieved the status of Silver Life Master; he also happily  
22 helped at Harvest & Blooms, the Rochester farm owned by his  
23 son, Garrick, and daughter-in-law, Violeta; and

1           WHEREAS, George Veenstra is survived by his wife of over  
2           50 years, Jeanne Titone Veenstra; his sons, Garrick, Matt, and  
3           Phil; his brothers, Bob and Ron; and his grandchildren, Sol,  
4           Sebi, Liam, Riley, Maddie, Ella, Finley, and Cecilia;  
5           therefore, be it

6           RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL  
7           ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of  
8           George Finley Veenstra and extend our sincere condolences to  
9           his family, friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be it  
10          further

11          RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
12          presented to the family of George Veenstra as an expression of  
13          our deepest sympathy.