



HR0254

LRB103 31713 MST 60286 r

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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 Edward
4 George Gardner of Chicago, who passed away on March 20, 2023;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, Edward Gardner was born to Frank and Eva Gardner
7 in the West Chesterfield neighborhood of Chicago on February
8 15, 1925; he attended Fenger High School; he served as a
9 sergeant in the U.S. Army during World War II; he received his
10 Bachelor of Arts from Chicago Teachers College, known today as
11 Chicago State University; he earned his Master of Arts from
12 the University of Chicago; and

13 WHEREAS, Edward Gardner was regarded as a Chicago titan of
14 business and philanthropy; in 1964, he and his wife, Bettian,
15 founded the hair care company Soft Sheen Products, Inc.; they
16 developed the business into a multimillion-dollar enterprise,
17 employing more than 400 people and exporting products to
18 Canada, the Caribbean, and West Africa; and

19 WHEREAS, Edward Gardner utilized Soft Sheen Products,
20 Inc.'s advertising and communication resources and leveraged a
21 \$300,000 fundraising effort and staff to mount a campaign that
22 registered more than 200,000 voters 40 years ago, which was

1 instrumental in the 1983 election of Chicago's first Black
2 mayor, the late Harold Washington; and

3 WHEREAS, Edward Gardner was also known for his dedication
4 to the arts; he and his wife spearheaded the development of the
5 New Regal Theater located at 1641 East 79th Street in Chicago,
6 which hosted acts ranging from Gladys Knight to Tyler Perry
7 during its years in operation; and

8 WHEREAS, Edward Gardner remained committed to his
9 community throughout his life; at the age of 87, he led a march
10 of over 1,000 people to protest the lack of Black workers on a
11 major construction site on Chicago's South Side in 2012; and

12 WHEREAS, Edward Gardner was a co-owner of the Chicago
13 Bulls and a founding member of the anti-violence nonprofit
14 Black On Black Love; he was also a board member of Chicago
15 United and The Chicago Urban League; and

16 WHEREAS, Edward Gardner was known for engaging others with
17 humanity and humility; he will be remembered for his
18 dedication to his family, his community, and the City of
19 Chicago; therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
21 HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that

1 we mourn the passing of Edward George Gardner and extend our
2 sincere condolences to his family, friends, and all who knew
3 and loved him; and be it further

4 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
5 presented to the family of Edward Gardner as an expression of
6 our deepest sympathy.