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HOUSE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives wish to recognize the George Washington Carver Community Center's rich, 100-year history; and

WHEREAS, The George Washington Carver Community Center's legacy is that of the Colored Women's Aid Club; and

WHEREAS, The Colored Women's Aid Club, founded in 1899, was an early and active member of a state and national network of African American women's organizations known as the Black Women's Club Movement; and

WHEREAS, The organization was part of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, founded in 1896, whose motto is "Lifting As We Climb", as well as its state affiliate, the Illinois Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, founded in 1899, whose motto was "Loyalty to Women and Justice to Children"; and

WHEREAS, With like-minded women reformers throughout the State, Peoria's club women lobbied for measures such as women's suffrage, anti-lynching laws, and, especially, kindergartens, which would benefit young children and working mothers; they promoted citizenship classes to educate new

1 voters, investigated conditions in jails and poor houses,
2 provided scholarships, and continuously raised money to help
3 the poor and comfort the sick; as original partners of what is
4 now the Heart of Illinois United Way and as early members of
5 the Peoria Women's Civic Federation, the club fostered
6 interracial collaboration; and

7 WHEREAS, By the 1920s, the Illinois Federation of Colored
8 Women's Clubs was the largest organization in the State to
9 champion the rights of Black people and the most comprehensive
10 welfare agency meeting their needs, according to historian
11 Wanda Hendricks; and

12 WHEREAS, In cities throughout the State, including
13 Chicago, Evanston, Rockford, Canton, Danville, Bloomington,
14 Springfield, East St. Louis, and Cairo, Black women involved
15 in the club movement founded settlement houses, schools,
16 orphanages, old folks' homes, and community centers; and

17 WHEREAS, In Peoria, the Colored Women's Aid Club opened
18 the Negro Community Center on October 9, 1922, after raising
19 \$2,000 to buy a house at 108 S. Globe; the center grew as
20 Peoria's Black population swelled with the Great Migration
21 from the south; by 1937, the club had paid \$4,500 in cash to
22 move the center to a larger house at 1010 N. Sanford; and

1 WHEREAS, A few years later, the Colored Women's Aid Club
2 gave control to an interracial, community-wide board, which
3 embarked on a \$40,000 fundraising campaign to establish a new
4 community center; and

5 WHEREAS, The Negro Community Center officially became the
6 George Washington Carver Community Center in 1944; and

7 WHEREAS, The George Washington Carver Community Center is
8 a cultural landmark, a site of memory, for the joys,
9 struggles, and achievements of generations, many of whom
10 became local legends in education, sports, politics, social
11 justice, law enforcement, and the arts; the center has either
12 influenced or been influenced by nationally recognized
13 pioneers such as comedian Richard Pryor, Civil Rights
14 activists C.T. Vivian and Valeska Hinton, basketball Olympians
15 Charla Lewis and Carla McGee, and, notably, Elizabeth Lindsay
16 Davis, a national leader and historian of the early Black
17 Women's Club Movement; and

18 WHEREAS, The George Washington Carver Community Center is
19 one of the last institutions in Illinois with direct links to
20 the early Black Women's Club Movement; therefore, be it

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

1 we recognize the George Washington Carver Community Center for
2 its commitment to "Lifting As We Climb" on the 100th
3 anniversary of its roots; and be it further

4 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
5 presented to the George Washington Carver Community Center as
6 a symbol of our respect and esteem.