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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 Robert "Bob" Emmett McGrath of New Jersey, who passed away on December 4, 2022 at the age of 90; and

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WHEREAS, Bob McGrath was born in Ottawa, Illinois on June 13, 1932 to Edmund Thomas McGrath and Flora Agnes (Halligan) McGrath; and

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WHEREAS, Bob McGrath's father, Edmund, was a farmer; his mother, Flora, who sang and played piano, recognized his impressive singing voice by age five; as such, he began entering and winning competitions in Chicago and was featured on the radio as well; and

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WHEREAS, Bob McGrath changed his educational and professional plans after attending a Chicagoland summer music camp once he graduated from high school; when he became a college student, he chose to major in voice over engineering; and

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WHEREAS, Upon graduation from the University of Michigan in 1954, Bob McGrath served for two years in the United States Army; he was stationed in Stuttgart, Germany; and

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1           WHEREAS, Bob McGrath incorporated his passion for music  
2 into his Armed Services experience by joining the Seventh Army  
3 Symphony; he moved to New York City once this call to duty  
4 ended; and

5           WHEREAS, Bob McGrath met his future wife, Ann Logan  
6 Sperry, on his first day in the Big Apple; he later earned a  
7 master's degree in music from the Manhattan School; and

8           WHEREAS, Bob McGrath became one of 25 male singers that  
9 starred in the Sing Along with Mitch television show in 1961;  
10 prior to this casting, he taught at the St. David's private  
11 boys' school in Manhattan and performed as a freelance artist;  
12 and

13           WHEREAS, Bob McGrath was promoted as the feature male  
14 soloist on Sing Along with Mitch after the host, Mitch Miller,  
15 listened to his rendition of Mother Machree; and

16           WHEREAS, Bob McGrath embarked on an international group  
17 tour, including 30 performances in Japan, after the show's  
18 final episode; before long, he developed a Japanese fan base,  
19 which led to the recording of nine albums in the country on  
20 Columbia Records' Japanese label, Nippon Columbia; and

1           WHEREAS, Bob McGrath transitioned to regular performances  
2 for a younger audience by joining the debut cast of Sesame  
3 Street in 1969; art imitated life in that his character was a  
4 human music teacher named Bob; he was a mainstay on the show  
5 for nearly 50 years, or 47 seasons; he was also a part of  
6 longer Sesame Street productions, such as Elmo Saves  
7 Christmas, Follow that Bird, and A Special Sesame Street  
8 Christmas; and

9           WHEREAS, Bob McGrath was known for his overt acts of  
10 kindness and accommodation for his co-performers; for example,  
11 he learned American Sign Language to better communicate with a  
12 fellow actor who was born deaf; and

13           WHEREAS, Bob McGrath continued to participate in public  
14 Sesame Street-related events after his 2017 departure; and

15           WHEREAS, Bob McGrath is survived by his wife, Ann; his  
16 children, Cathlin, Liam, Robert, and Lily McGrath and Alison  
17 McGrath Osder; his older sister, Eileen Strobel; and his eight  
18 grandchildren; therefore, be it

19           RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL  
20 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of  
21 Robert "Bob" Emmett McGrath and extend our sincere condolences  
22 to his family, friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be

1 it further

2 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
3 presented to the family of Robert "Bob" Emmett McGrath as an  
4 expression of our deepest sympathy.