



SR0909

LRB103 40219 JDS 72123 r

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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 Cook County Clerk Karen A. Yarbrough, who passed away on April 7, 2024; and

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WHEREAS, Clerk Yarbrough was born on August 22, 1950; she earned her Bachelor of Arts in Business Management from Chicago State University and her Master of Arts in Inner City Studies from Northeastern Illinois University; she and her husband, Henderson, have been longtime Maywood residents and active members of their community; and

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WHEREAS, Clerk Yarbrough was a beloved leader, a dedicated public servant, and a tireless legislator who was serving her second term as Clerk of Cook County at the time of her passing, leaving behind a career that spanned local and state politics for over three decades; and

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WHEREAS, Clerk Yarbrough was first elected Clerk of Cook County in 2018, becoming the first woman and first African American to hold the office; she oversaw elections in suburban Cook County and maintained the county's vital records, such as birth, marriage, civil union, and death certificates; she was credited with implementing sweeping changes throughout the office, including a complete modernization of election voting

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1 equipment and enhancements to the entire voting process for  
2 suburban voters; and

3 WHEREAS, During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in  
4 2020, Clerk Yarbrough successfully managed a first-of-its kind  
5 government consolidation by assuming all duties of the former  
6 Cook County Recorder of Deeds Office into the operations of  
7 the Clerk's Office; she was noted for her commitment to  
8 accuracy, efficiency, advocacy, and cybersecurity, resulting  
9 in groundbreaking initiatives in programming and technology;  
10 and

11 WHEREAS, Clerk Yarbrough previously served as Cook County  
12 Recorder of Deeds from December 2012 to 2018; prior to that,  
13 she served as State Representative of Illinois' 7th District  
14 from 2001 until 2012, representing parts of the western  
15 suburbs of Chicago; and

16 WHEREAS, During her tenure in the Illinois House of  
17 Representatives, Clerk Yarbrough served as an Assistant  
18 Majority Leader and as a leader of the Black Caucus and  
19 sponsored many landmark pieces of legislation, including the  
20 law that abolished the death penalty in the State, one of the  
21 nation's first cyberstalking laws, and the Smoke Free Illinois  
22 Act; and

1           WHEREAS, Clerk Yarbrough was active in the Democratic  
2 Party, working for both the Cook County Democratic Party and  
3 the Democratic Party of Illinois; she served as a  
4 committeeperson for the Cook County Democratic Party,  
5 representing west suburban Proviso Township, and also served  
6 as treasurer; she was a member of the State Central Committee  
7 for the Democratic Party of Illinois; and

8           WHEREAS, Outside of politics, Clerk Yarbrough was a  
9 licensed real estate broker and the founder of the Hathaway  
10 Insurance Agency; and

11           WHEREAS, Clerk Yarbrough was a wife, a mother, a sister,  
12 an aunt, a mentor, and a trailblazer; as a public servant, she  
13 remained committed to social and economic justice, serving as  
14 a champion of women's rights and a defender of the  
15 underprivileged; she will be remembered for leading an  
16 incredibly impactful life while serving the people of Illinois  
17 with steadfast devotion; therefore, be it

18           RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL  
19 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of  
20 Cook County Clerk Karen A. Yarbrough and extend our sincere  
21 condolences to her family, friends, and all who knew and loved  
22 her; and be it further

1           RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
2 presented to the family of Clerk Yarbrough as an expression of  
3 our deepest sympathy.