



SR1004

LRB103 40746 LAW 73567 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 Karen Antoinette Pepper of Chicago, who passed away on August 15, 2023 at the age of 74; and

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WHEREAS, Karen Pepper was born to Doris Marie (Dixon) Austin and Theodore Roosevelt Austin in Chicago on March 11, 1949; she was raised by her paternal grandmother, Luellen "Big Mama" Dorch Adams, and her step-grandfather, James "Pa-Pa" Adams; she graduated from Farragut High School in 1966, and she spoke highly of her classmates and participated in reunion events for many years thereafter; and

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WHEREAS, Karen Pepper married William R. Pepper in 1969; once the union ended, they successfully co-parented four children who all built successful professional and personal lives for themselves; and

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WHEREAS, Karen Pepper completed her postsecondary schooling at Rosary College and the University of Illinois Chicago School of Nursing; after developing a passion for interior design, she earned a certificate in interior design from Malcolm X College; and

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WHEREAS, Karen Pepper's creative genius was on display

1 throughout Chicagoland; she held interior decorating roles at
2 Montgomery Wards and Sears before ultimately retiring from
3 Plunkett Furniture; she was also a talented seamstress, and
4 her portfolio included prom dresses, wedding gowns, and choir
5 robes; and

6 WHEREAS, Karen Pepper adored her family and friends,
7 sending them birthday group texts filled with pictures and
8 emojis; she was also available and willing to provide advice
9 and prayer for anyone in need, and this goodwill resulted in
10 multiple nicknames, including "Aunt Karen", "Mina", and
11 "Special K"; and

12 WHEREAS, Karen Pepper was a member of multiple faith
13 communities throughout her lifetime; she raised her four
14 children in the Holy Family Catholic Church on Chicago's near
15 West Side, where she was a member of the choir and served as
16 president of the Holy Family Parish Council; she found a
17 second spiritual home at the Apostolic Church of God on
18 Chicago's South Side, where she continued singing as a choir
19 member and taught Sunday school; and

20 WHEREAS, Karen Pepper was known to prefer her food served
21 "piping hot"; she also enjoyed gardening and games, pursuing
22 the latter to keep her mind sharp; and

1 WHEREAS, Karen Pepper was preceded in death by her
2 parents; her siblings, Theodore "Butch" Austin and Diana
3 Schmakel; and her godmother, Maryann Jones; and

4 WHEREAS, At the time of her passing, Karen Pepper was
5 survived by her children, Desiree (Kenneth) Pepper-Venzant,
6 DeShona (Alexander) Robertson, Donovan (Heidi) Pepper, and
7 Devin (Alicia) Pepper; her grandchildren, Maimuna, Tacuma,
8 Dakota, Dillon, William, Madilyn (Madi), and Lukas (Luke); her
9 stepsister, Dr. Loretta Brunious; her uncle, William "Bill"
10 (Florence) Dixon; her cousin, Deborah L. Dixon; her
11 sister-in-law, Dr. Judith Austin; and countless nieces,
12 nephews, great-nieces, and great-nephews; therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL
14 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
15 Karen Antoinette Pepper and extend our sincere condolences to
16 her family, friends, and all who knew and loved her; and be it
17 further

18 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
19 presented to the family of Karen Pepper as an expression of our
20 deepest sympathy.