



1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives were saddened to learn of the death of Silas
4 Purnell on November 1, 2003; and

5 WHEREAS, Mr. Purnell was the retired of director of the
6 Educational Services Division at Ada S. McKinley Community
7 Services, Inc., after 34 years of service; and

8 WHEREAS, Silas Purnell was born on March 10, 1923 in
9 Chicago; he was a graduate of the Chicago Public School System
10 and received his bachelor's degree in business administration
11 from the Tuskegee Institute; in addition, he served in the
12 United States Air Force for 3 and one-half years; and

13 WHEREAS, Mr. Purnell was employed for 12 years with Coca
14 Cola Bottling Company, where he served 10 of those years as
15 Marketing Manager; and

16 WHEREAS, In 1967, Mr. Purnell began his career at Ada S.
17 McKinley after spending a year as a volunteer; his base of
18 operations for 34 years was a basement level unit in the
19 Dearborn Homes public housing development at 2961 South
20 Dearborn Street on Chicago's South Side; and

21 WHEREAS, During his tenure at Ada S. McKinley Community
22 Services, Inc., Mr. Purnell instituted programs to get minority
23 youth off the streets, encouraged them to finish high school,
24 and counseled and supported their efforts to enroll in college;
25 he helped over 50,000 young African-American men and women
26 enroll in over 200 colleges and universities throughout the
27 country and increased the retention rate of the students he
28 assisted to well over 50 percent with many continuing on to
29 graduate and professional schools; and

1 WHEREAS, Mr. Purnell used a "no nonsense" approach to
2 education; he counseled each student based on their academic
3 and professional ambitions and gave them the encouragement,
4 wisdom, and vision to accomplish their goals; and

5 WHEREAS, In addition to his duties, Mr. Purnell went beyond
6 the call of duty by helping less advantaged students with
7 anything from busfare to eyeglasses and was available to
8 counsel on issues far beyond the classroom; and

9 WHEREAS, Silas Purnell served as a member of numerous
10 organizations and volunteer services, including the National
11 Association of College Admission Counselors, past chairman of
12 the Human Relations Committee, member of the Veterans
13 Committee, the Illinois Association of College Admissions
14 Counselors, the National Scholarship and Service Fund for Negro
15 Students, member of the Council for College Attendance, the
16 Pullman Foundation, the Office of the Superintendent of Public
17 Instruction, board member for the Illinois Council for
18 Educational Services, chairman for the National Coordinating
19 Committee for Educational Services, the Illinois State
20 Scholarship Commission, the Midwest Community Council, the
21 National Association for Financial Aid to Minority Students,
22 the Research Triangle Institute, member of the American
23 Personnel and Guidance Association Non-White Concerns
24 Division, the College Entrance Examination Board, member of
25 Midwest Association of Student Financial Aid Opportunity
26 Program Personnel, founder of Principal Scholars Program,
27 Olive Harvey Community College, the Chicago City Colleges
28 Career Center, chairman of the nominating committee for the
29 Chicago City College Board of Trustees, member of the Chicago
30 Urban League, member of the Council of College Attendance,
31 board member of the Boys and Girls Club of Chicago, member of
32 the Illinois Concerned Blacks in Higher Education, member of
33 the Wendell Phillips High School Hall of Fame and Alumni, and
34 member of Mid America Association of Educational Opportunity

1 Program Personnel; and

2 WHEREAS, In addition, Mr. Purnell provided his time and
3 service to the Illinois Department of Public Aid, the Illinois
4 Board of Higher Education, Operation PUSH and the NAACP; and

5 WHEREAS, On July 1, 2004, Public Act 93-455, which amends
6 the Higher Education Student Assistance Act and changes the
7 Illinois Incentive for Access Grant Program to the Silas
8 Purnell Illinois Incentive for Access Grant Program, will
9 become effective; and

10 WHEREAS, Silas Purnell will be remembered as a mentor, role
11 model, and dedicated leader in the community whose
12 determination helped and encouraged thousands of
13 African-American youth to pursue their dreams and ambitions;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, Mr. Purnell's passing will be deeply felt by many,
16 especially his wife, Marilyn; his four children, Rosalind,
17 Rolinda, Ronald, and Donna Purnell; his six grandchildren; and
18 many other relatives and friends; and

19 WHEREAS, He was preceded in death by one child; therefore,
20 be it

21 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
22 NINETY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
23 mourn the passing of Silas Purnell along with all who knew and
24 loved him and extend our sincere condolences to his family and
25 friends; and be it further

26 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
27 presented to the family of Silas Purnell as an expression of
28 our deepest sympathy.