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SENATE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The members of the Senate of the State of Illinois were saddened to learn of the death of Myrtle Bernadine Gilliam Officer on April 23, 2004; and

WHEREAS, Myrtle Bernadine Gilliam was born on April 22, 1923, in Okolona, Mississippi to Raymond G. Gilliam and Myrtle Robinson Gilliam; sadly, her mother died three months after her birth; her maternal grandparents, B.I. and Florence Robinson, reared her in their home on Pearl Street in Jackson, Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, She received her formal education from the Jackson, Mississippi Public School System and graduated from Lanier High School in 1941; following graduation, she spent her college freshman year at Tougaloo College in Tougaloo, Mississippi; it was there she met a handsome, young soldier named Marion E. Officer who would become her partner for life; and

WHEREAS, They were united in Holy Matrimony April 25, 1944, a few days before he was deployed to Europe during World War II; she moved to East St. Louis and lived with his parents while waiting for his return; they were blessed with three children, a daughter, Bernadette, and two sons, Carl and Marion, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Officer was extremely instrumental in assisting her husband when he succeeded his parents as the President of Officer Funeral Home in 1954; she made the difficult decision to leave her family in September 1956 to attend Worsham College of Mortuary Science in Chicago; she received her degree in June of 1957; following a one year apprenticeship, she became a licensed funeral director and embalmer in the State of Illinois in 1958; following the death

1 of her husband in 1989, she became the CEO of the Officer  
2 Funeral Homes; under her leadership, the firm continued the  
3 legacy of providing excellence in funeral service and service  
4 to the community; and

5 WHEREAS, As a community leader, Mrs. Officer was involved  
6 in numerous local and national organizations including: Venus  
7 Temple #1042 I.B.P.O.E. of W (charter member), Queen Elizabeth  
8 Chapter #16 Order of the Eastern Star, the East St. Louis  
9 Women's Club, and the Las Amigas Club; she was also a member of  
10 a number of professional organizations including: the  
11 International Order of the Golden Rule, the National Funeral  
12 Directors Association, St. Clair County Association of Family  
13 Owned Funeral Homes, St. Clair County Funeral Directors  
14 Association, and the Missouri Funeral Directors and Embalmers  
15 Association; and

16 WHEREAS, Mrs. Officer enjoyed three things; shopping, more  
17 shopping, and shopping until you drop; she was as happy  
18 shopping at the Dollar Store as she was uptown; when her health  
19 prevented her from indulging her passion, she found comfort in  
20 QVC; and

21 WHEREAS, Mrs. Officer's greatest accomplishment was being  
22 a mother and grandmother; she never ceased teaching or  
23 nurturing her family with wisdom and love; she was a quiet  
24 tower of determination and strength; and

25 WHEREAS, The passing of Myrtle Bernadine Gilliam Officer  
26 will be deeply felt by many, especially her loving children,  
27 Ms. M. Bernadette Officer, Mayor Carl E. Officer (Lisa), and  
28 Mr. Marion E. Officer, II, (Adrienne); her grandchildren,  
29 Melanie B. Officer, Marion E. Officer, III, and Carli E.  
30 Officer; her step-grandchildren, Roderick J. Lewis and Ryan J.  
31 Lewis; her sister, Ramona Gilliam Roberts; her second loving  
32 family, Mrs. Ada N. Woodson, Mrs. Jocelyn Woodson Reed, Ms.

1 Natalie Woodson, Mr. Brandon W. Reed, and Mrs. Patricia A.  
2 Thornton (Wayman); Rev. Delancey H. Moore, Sr., (Debra),  
3 Delancey H. Moore, II, and Darrington Moore; her cousins, Mrs.  
4 Annie Johnson (Jesse) and Mrs. Beverly Anderson (Maurice); her  
5 many nieces, nephews, and godchildren; her other relatives and  
6 many friends; her St. Luke A.M.E. Church family; and her loyal  
7 and devoted staff; therefore, be it

8       RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-THIRD GENERAL  
9 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the death of  
10 Myrtle Bernadine Gilliam Officer along with all who knew and  
11 loved her and extend our sincere condolences to her family,  
12 friends, and community; and be it further

13       RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
14 presented to the family of Myrtle Bernadine Gilliam as a token  
15 of our deepest sympathy.