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HOUSE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The members of the House of Representatives of the State of Illinois learned with sadness of the death of Jorja English Palmer on December 29, 2005; and

WHEREAS, She was born June 16, 1930, in New Madrid, Missouri, to Frank and Elizabeth (Bessie) Williams; when she was four years old, both of her parents died; she and her brothers and sisters were brought to Chicago, Illinois, where they lived with their aunt, Esther Mack, on Chicago's south side; and

WHEREAS, She attended Willard and Forestville Elementary Schools; she graduated from DuSable High School and Chicago City Junior Colleges with honors; while in elementary school, she participated in a special program for the Study of Gifted Children, and in high school, she was singled out by several teachers to join the NAACP and Youth Committee, involvement that began to shape and mold her life for all time to come; and

WHEREAS, In 1952, she married Jami English, Sr., and in this union they became parents of four children, Darien Yvonne, Karen Elaine, Jami, Jr., and Stanford; by 1960, she was head of the West Chatham Improvement Organization Education Committee and was sent by that body to the newly formed Chicago Community Council Organization; in the 1970s, she engaged in the fight for an African-American school board president for the Chicago Board of Public Schools and made history as a delegate to the National Black Political Assembly in Gary, Indiana; and

WHEREAS, In 1975, she married journalist and political pundit Lu Palmer; in 1981 they made a move for real community power when they convened "Toward a Black Mayor" at Malcolm X College; it was Jorja Palmer who created the process for selecting a black mayoral candidate; together, the Palmers

1 launched the largest voter registration drive in Chicago's
2 history, which created the political environment in the
3 African-American community that persuaded Harold Washington to
4 launch his candidacy for mayor; and

5 WHEREAS, She worked with S.N.C.C., CORE, SCLE, and the
6 NAACP, the Urban League, the Black Panthers, the Parent
7 Equalizers, Operation PUSH, the Garfield Organization, WSO,
8 and many other groups; with Arnita Boswell, Nancy Jefferson,
9 and Lenore Cartwright, Mrs. Palmer helped found the League of
10 Black Women; she went on to work in the political thrust with
11 leaders such as Allan Streeter, Danny K. Davis, Rev. Jesse L.
12 Jackson, Sammy Rayner, Attorney William Cousins, Anna
13 Langford, Barbara A. Sizemore, Bobby Rush, Lovana Jones,
14 Dorothy Tillman, Wesley South, Cirilo McSween, Minister Louis
15 Farrakhan, Bob Starks, Conrad Worrill, Dr. Martin Luther King,
16 Malcolm X, Lu Palmer, and many others; and

17 WHEREAS, She became more involved with the communications
18 aspect of the Movement, drafting press releases, summarizing
19 the slogans, the media events, and the general call-to-arms for
20 CBUC's thrust Toward a Black Mayor; she helped Lu with his
21 newspaper, The Black X-Press, and she stood beside him in every
22 venture of his life, from an earlier battle to get an African
23 American chosen as school board president, to the crusade to
24 elect Harold Washington, to their joint membership in an
25 inter-racial political organization called PRO-CAN
26 (Progressive Chicago Area Network), and in countless other
27 causes; on October 22, 1982, Jorja founded and established the
28 Stanford English Home for Boys, the first group home for
29 African-American children in Illinois, which was named for her
30 autistic son, Stanford English, who is deceased; and

31 WHEREAS, The passing of Jorja English Palmer has been
32 deeply felt by many, especially her children Darien Y. Simon
33 (Horace "Les"), Karen E. English, and Jami D. English, Jr.

1 (Karen); her grandchildren, Patrick Simon (Nolanna), Natilee
2 Simon, and Jelani and Imani English; her great-grandchildren,
3 Nya and Patrick (P.J.) Simon; her stepson, Lu Palmer, III; and
4 her many cousins, nieces, nephews, friends, and co-workers;
5 therefore, be it

6 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
7 NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
8 we mourn the passing of Jorja English Palmer, a woman whose
9 contributions to the African-American community of Chicago
10 will long be remembered, and we extend our deepest sympathy to
11 her family, friends, and all who knew and loved her; and be it
12 further

13 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
14 presented to her family as an expression of our sincerest
15 condolences.