



1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Constable James Quinn died in the line of duty on
3 December 5, 1853, having succumbed to serious injuries
4 sustained while discharging his duties as both a constable and
5 an early member of the municipal police force in Chicago; and

6 WHEREAS, Having sustained a broken rib and an injured jaw
7 in the first attack and having been thrown to the ground and
8 kicked several times resulting in fractured ribs and a
9 punctured lung during a second attack, Constable Quinn
10 continued to pursue an escaped prisoner; and

11 WHEREAS, On the two days preceding his death, Constable
12 Quinn continued to report for duty, finally causing the capture
13 of both his escaped prisoner, as well as the tavern owner,
14 William Rees, who beat him on both occasions; and

15 WHEREAS, Constable Quinn's condition deteriorated
16 resulting in a congestion of the brain, and he finally died
17 from injuries sustained in the line of duty; and

18 WHEREAS, Following the death of Constable James Quinn, the
19 Chicago Common Council Committee on Police found on December
20 12, 1853, that "an officer had been recently killed in the
21 discharge of his duty" and the entire Chicago Police Force was
22 ordered to descend on the North Division vice district to rout
23 out crime and "Vindicate the Honor of the Police"; and

24 WHEREAS, Following the conviction of Constable Quinn's
25 killer, William Rees, the Chicago Common Council awarded his
26 wife, Margaret Quinn, benefits as the result of his death in
27 the line of duty; and

28 WHEREAS, On February 27, 1854, the Chicago Common Council
29 noted in its official proceedings that Constable "James Quinn

1 was deprived of life and his helpless family bereaved of their
2 sole support and protection under no ordinary circumstances,
3 but in the honest and faithful discharge of his duty as an
4 officer of the city"; and

5 WHEREAS, The circumstances surrounding the death of
6 Constable James Quinn and the trial and conviction of the
7 perpetrator of his death, William Rees, has been reported with
8 historical documentation in the Chicago Evening Journal,
9 Chicago Republican, Daily Democratic Press, and Chicago
10 Tribune; and

11 WHEREAS, During the proceedings of the trial against
12 Constable Quinn's assailant, one William Rees, testimony
13 concerning the injuries that caused Constable Quinn's death
14 were substantiated by two well-known Chicago medical persons,
15 Dr. Herrick and Dr. Henrotin; and

16 WHEREAS, William Rees was convicted of the death of
17 Constable Quinn, as set forth on the one-count indictment, that
18 "James Quinn came to his death from an assault made by William
19 Rees on the second day of December last"; and

20 WHEREAS, Judge Robert S. Wilson of the Recorder's Court
21 sentenced William Rees to five years in the penitentiary at
22 Alton; and

23 WHEREAS, The testimony of Constable Quinn's widow moved the
24 members of the Chicago Common Council on February 27, 1854, to
25 recognize Constable Quinn's service and sacrifice to the people
26 of Chicago; and

27 WHEREAS, On March 6, 1854, the Chicago City Council's
28 Committee on Judiciary concurred favorable with the Widow
29 Quinn's petition authorizing her compensation for her
30 husband's death in the line of duty as a constable; and

1 WHEREAS, Common sense tells us that the conviction of Rees
2 and this payment to a fallen officer's widow proves a prima
3 facie line of duty death in the case of Constable Quinn and
4 establishes Margaret Quinn as the first Line of Duty death
5 widow in Chicago history; and

6 WHEREAS, Historical evidence attests that this was the
7 first such payment to a fallen officer's widow in the City of
8 Chicago; and

9 WHEREAS, One hundred fifty-three years have elapsed since
10 the death in the line of the duty of Constable James Quinn; and

11 WHEREAS, The addition of substantive historical
12 scholarship and documentation, provided by the research and
13 analysis of former DEA Agent Richard Barrett, has expanded the
14 knowledge and understanding of Constable James Quinn's
15 sacrifice on behalf of the people of Chicago; and

16 WHEREAS, With the passage of time and the obscuring of
17 memory, the Chicago Police Department has not accorded
18 Constable James Quinn with the official distinction of an
19 officer killed in the line of duty; therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
21 NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
22 we encourage the Chicago Police Department to resolve the
23 accidents of history and accord Constable James Quinn all the
24 rights and honors of a fallen officer killed in the line of
25 duty by listing him in all official records as the first
26 Chicago Policeman killed in the line of duty, and to include a
27 badge representing Constable James Quinn's service in the
28 Honored Star Case at Police Headquarters, and to include his
29 name on the municipal memorial under construction honoring
30 those heroes of Chicago law enforcement; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That we encourage the Chicago Police Department
2 to authorize the National Law Enforcement Officer's Memorial in
3 Washington, D.C., of Constable James Quinn's inclusion in the
4 roll of Chicago Police Officers killed in the line of duty; and
5 be it further

6 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
7 presented to the Superintendent of Chicago Police, Philip J.
8 Cline, and members of the Chicago Police Department Awards
9 Committee.