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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Senate of the State of Illinois learned with regret of the death of Jorja English Palmer, Chicago organizer, activist, and freedom fighter, on December 29, 2005; and

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WHEREAS, Mrs. Palmer was born in New Madrid, Missouri, the seventh of nine children; her parents died when she was four, and she and her siblings moved to Chicago's South Side to live with an aunt; and

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WHEREAS, She graduated from Du Sable High School in 1948 and had already joined the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People at the urging of several teachers; this was the beginning of a lifetime of activism that included working in public relations for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the Reverend Jesse Jackson Sr., and Minister Louis Farrakhan; she was a leader in the battle to end school segregation in Chicago, and she fought for fair housing in the city; and

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WHEREAS, In 1975, Mrs. Palmer married Lutrelle "Lu" Fleming Palmer Jr., who made a name for himself as an outspoken advocate for civil rights as a journalist for the Chicago Daily News and a regular commentator on Chicago's airwaves; he preceded her in death in 2004; together, the Palmers were a "one-two punch" of commitment to a range of causes, including founding Chicago Black United Communities (CBUC); and

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WHEREAS, In 1981, the couple used the CBUC to launch the city's largest voter registration drive, which solidified a constituency of black voters for Harold Washington, who went on to become Chicago's first black mayor in 1983; in 1982, Mrs. Palmer established the Stanford English Home for Boys, which is considered the first group home in Illinois for black children,

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1 named for her autistic son, the late Stanford English; and

2 WHEREAS, The passing of Jorja English Palmer has been  
3 deeply felt by many, especially her daughters, Darien Y. Simon  
4 and Karen E. English; her son, Jami D. English; her  
5 stepdaughter, Trudy Palmer; and her stepson, Lu Palmer III;  
6 therefore, be it

7 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL  
8 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of  
9 Jorja English Palmer, a woman who exerted a profound influence  
10 in the lives of countless people, fighting for justice and  
11 equality, and we extend our sincere condolences to her family,  
12 friends, and all who knew and loved her; and be it further

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