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SENATE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The members of the Senate of the State of Illinois learned with sadness of the death of Sonja I. James of Naperville on Monday, March 20, 2006; and

WHEREAS, The daughter of Swedish immigrants, Mrs. James was born and raised in Chicago's Beverly neighborhood and graduated from Morgan Park High School in 1959; she received a bachelor's degree in psychology from Valparaiso University and worked as a social worker and probation officer for Cook County on Chicago's South Side; and

WHEREAS, In 1967 she moved to Naperville and worked as a counselor at River Edge, a treatment facility for troubled teens on Chicago's West Side; she received a master's degree in psychology from Roosevelt University; in the early 1970s, she started her own private practice as a licensed psychologist in Naperville before becoming the Director of Breaking Free, an Aurora-based treatment facility for troubled teens; she later served as Director of the Will County Department of Mental Health, prior to retiring in 1995; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. James was a leading proponent of historic preservation in Naperville, beginning in the mid-1980s, when the aesthetic and historic character of her East Side neighborhood was first threatened by the teardown and replacement of older homes; she co-founded the East Central Home Owners Association (ECHO), a group dedicated to the historical preservation of the area that helped pass a city ordinance leading to the creation of the Naperville Historic District; and

WHEREAS, As a founder and former President of the ECHO, Mrs. James did everything she could to educate the public about historical preservation; she shared information from experts,

1 backed candidates for public office that supported historic
2 preservation, and raised awareness for this issue amongst
3 members of the media; she made a difference in the culture of
4 her community; and

5 WHEREAS, In her retirement, Mrs. James delighted in
6 creating ornate handbags and jewelry by stringing tiny beads
7 together; her passing will be deeply felt by the many who knew
8 and loved her, especially her husband, John; her son, Jonathan;
9 her daughter Erika Fessler; and her grandchildren; therefore,
10 be it

11 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL
12 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
13 Sonja James and extend our sincerest condolences to her family;
14 and be it further

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