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SENATE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate were saddened to learn of the passing of Joyce Laretta (Gill) Robinson on January 1, 2007; and

WHEREAS, Born on October 18, 1939, in Alton, Joyce Gill was the daughter of Harl A. Gill and Mary Lee (Watts) Gill Johnson; she was the stepdaughter of Edmond B. Johnson and was formerly married to the late Ralph Preston Robinson; and

WHEREAS, Influenced by her teacher Lula Mae Simms, Mrs. Robinson was educated as a teacher after graduating from the Alton School District and received her bachelor's and master's degrees in education from Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville; and

WHEREAS, As a student teacher in 1960, she was one of the first African Americans to teach at the integrated Alton High School and taught at the former St. Joseph's School of Nursing; in 1999, she retired from the state of Illinois after more than 35 years as a social worker at the Alton Mental Health Center; and

WHEREAS, From 1980 to 1995, she was a member of the Alton School Board as its first and only African-American woman member; for four years she served as the school board's president where she oversaw passage of the first bond issue in Alton in almost 20 years; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Robinson chaired the Eva McDonald Women's History Coalition, was a founder, life member, and membership chair of the National Council of Negro Women, Alton Section, and served as secretary and was a life member of the Elijah P. Lovejoy Memorial; she was a third-generation member of the Federated Unity Club of Alton and was a member of the Riverbend

1 Belles Red Hats; and

2 WHEREAS, A former member of Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church, she  
3 was active in Christian education and taught Sunday school for  
4 40 years; she subsequently joined Unity Fellowship Church and  
5 was active in the Mary L. Johnson Missionaries; and

6 WHEREAS, Mrs. Robinson received many awards for her  
7 community service, including the YWCA of Alton Women of  
8 Distinction Award and the Elijah P. Lovejoy Human Rights Award;  
9 she was an early recipient of the Lovejoy Memorial Scholarship;  
10 and

11 WHEREAS, Mrs. Robinson was known for her independence,  
12 sense of humor and devotion to human rights; and

13 WHEREAS, Laretta Johnson is survived by her three sons,  
14 John Eric Robinson, Ralph Preston Robinson and his wife,  
15 Stephanie, and Reginald Robinson and his wife, Lissette; her  
16 grandchildren, Preston Pierre, Kyle, Kerry, Kory, Keenan,  
17 Eliana, and Preston Jay; her niece and nephew who were like her  
18 children, Sylvia Flowers and Dwight Flowers; her sister, Joan  
19 Flowers, and her husband, Dwight; and her aunts, uncles,  
20 cousins, nieces, nephews and friends; she was preceded in death  
21 by her parents, stepfather and a brother, John Gill; therefore,  
22 be it

23 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL  
24 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn, along with  
25 her family and friends, the death of Joyce Laretta Robinson;  
26 and be it further

27 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
28 presented to the family of Joyce Laretta Robinson as a sign of  
29 our condolences.