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HOUSE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives are saddened to learn of the death of Helen K. Kmiec, who passed away on January 19, 2009; and

WHEREAS, Helen Kmiec was born on December 5, 1915 in Chicago; her parents were the late Stanislaw and Bronislawa Kwiecien; and

WHEREAS, Helen Kmiec graduated from St. Fidelis Grammar School, then attended Holy Family Academy's two-year business course while helping her parents in their neighborhood grocery store; afterwards, she spent a year at the University of Poland in Warsaw; she then spent another in Poland in scouting, when she attended the 1937 World Scout Jamboree and met Robert Baden-Powell, the founder of scouting, and General Wladyslaw Sikorski before returning home; and

WHEREAS, After she returned home, Helen Kmiec continued helping her parents in their grocery store; in 1939, she attended the World's Fair in New York; in 1941, while volunteering at the Polish Museum of America, she served as an usher at Orchestra Hall in Chicago when Ignacy Paderewski, the first premier of Poland and great pianist, came to the United States; and

1 WHEREAS, Upon America's entrance into World War II, Helen
2 Kmiec followed three of her brothers into the U.S. Navy,
3 serving with the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service
4 (WAVES) and Naval Intelligence as a Slavic Language Translator
5 in Washington, D.C. from 1944 to 1946; and

6 WHEREAS, After World War II, Helen Kmiec returned to
7 Chicago and worked various jobs; she became involved in the
8 Polish Legion of American Veterans (P.L.A.V.) and held the
9 offices of Post Treasurer, Adjutant, and Commander; she also
10 served as the group's Illinois State Adjutant and National
11 Adjutant; and

12 WHEREAS, In 1948, Helen Kmiec married a man from her
13 neighborhood, Mitchell, and settled in the same house her
14 parents had their store; there, she raised her two children,
15 Charles (Chuck), born in November of 1949, and Mitchelle
16 (Mitch), born in September of 1951; and

17 WHEREAS, In the late 1950s, Helen Kmiec became a Democratic
18 Precinct Captain under then-Aldermen Joseph and Daniel
19 Rosenkowsky and future Alderman Thomas Keane; she then went to
20 work part time to help pay for her children's Catholic school
21 education, first for the Cook County Record's Department, then
22 the City of Chicago Finance Committee, and finally the Cook

1 County Highway Department, where she worked until her
2 retirement at the age of 78; and

3 WHEREAS, In 1991, Helen Kmiec was presented with the Cook
4 County Public Service Award; while working at the Cook County
5 Highway Department, she became involved in the Edgar A.
6 Lawrence Highway Post, holding the position of Treasurer,
7 Adjutant, and eventually Post Commander; she was also awarded a
8 Life Membership from the organization; and

9 WHEREAS, Helen Kmiec was an active member of the St.
10 Fidelis Ladies Sodality; the American Legion, where she served
11 as Post Adjutant, Treasurer, and Commander and was a Life
12 Member; the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America; the Polish
13 National Alliance; and the Polish Women's Alliance; and

14 WHEREAS, Helen Kmiec was an avid traveler; she cruised on a
15 transatlantic ocean liner before World War II, long before
16 cruising became popular; she kayaked the lakes and hiked
17 through the Tatra Mountains in Poland; she rafted on the
18 Vistula/Danube Rivers in Poland; she sailed in a feluka
19 (sailboat) on the Nile River; she canoed up the Amazon; in
20 total, she visited 6 of the 7 continents; and

21 WHEREAS, Helen Kmiec was the beloved wife of the late
22 Mitchell P.; the loving mother and best friend of Mitchelle H.

1 and the late Charles M.; the sister of the late Thaddeus (late
2 Estelle), the late Chester (the late Helen), the late Eugene
3 (the late Edwina), and Richard (Helen) Kwiecien; and the dear
4 friend of many; therefore, be it

5 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
6 NINETY-SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
7 mourn, along with her family and friends, the passing of Helen
8 K. Kmiec; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
10 presented to the family of Helen Kmiec as an expression of our
11 sympathy.