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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives are saddened to learn of the death of Don
4 Cornelius, who passed away on February 1, 2012; and

5 WHEREAS, Don Cornelius was born on September 27, 1936, in
6 Chicago, and was raised in the Bronzeville neighborhood; after
7 graduating from DuSable High School in 1954, he joined the
8 United States Marine Corps, where he served for 18 months in
9 Korea; and

10 WHEREAS, After his stint in the military, Don Cornelius
11 worked at various jobs, including selling tires, automobiles,
12 and insurance, and as an officer with the Chicago Police
13 Department; he also married his high school sweetheart, Delores
14 Harrison, during this time; in 1966, he quit his day job to
15 take a 3-month broadcasting course; that same year, he landed a
16 job as an announcer, news reporter, and disc jockey on Chicago
17 radio station WVON; in 1967, he joined Chicago television
18 station WCIU-TV and hosted a news program called "A Black's
19 View of the News"; and

20 WHEREAS, Don Cornelius was best known as the creator of the
21 nationally-syndicated dance/music franchise "Soul Train"; in
22 1969, he launched "Soul Train" on WCIU-TV as a daily local

1 show; the program entered national syndication and moved to Los
2 Angeles the following year; he served as the host of the
3 popular program from 1971 to 1993; and

4 WHEREAS, Through his show, Don Cornelius introduced many
5 African-American musicians to a larger audience; as writer,
6 producer, and host of "Soul Train", he was instrumental in
7 offering wider exposure to such musicians as James Brown,
8 Aretha Franklin, and Michael Jackson, as well as creating
9 opportunities for talented dancers that would inspire
10 subsequent television dance programs; at its peak, "Soul Train"
11 was watched in over 105 cities throughout the United States and
12 reached over 85% of African-American households; and

13 WHEREAS, In addition to his work on "Soul Train", Don
14 Cornelius was the driving force behind the creation of the Soul
15 Train Music Awards in 1987 and the Lady of Soul Awards in 1995;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, Don Cornelius is survived by his sons, Anthony and
18 Raymond; therefore, be it

19 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
20 NINETY-SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
21 we mourn, along with his family and friends, the passing of Don
22 Cornelius; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
2 presented to the family of Don Cornelius as an expression of
3 our sympathy.