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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois General Assembly are  
3 saddened to learn of the death of Susan Cayton Woodson of  
4 Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood, who passed away on January  
5 31, 2013; and

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WHEREAS, Susan Cayton Woodson was born on October 16, 1918,  
7 in Seattle, Washington; as her mother died when she was just  
8 one year old, she was raised by her maternal grandparents,  
9 Horace Roscoe Cayton, Sr., and Susie Revels Cayton; and

10

WHEREAS, Susan Cayton Woodson was very conscious of her  
11 heritage and worked hard to honor her ancestors in her life's  
12 work; her great-grandfather, Hiram Rhodes Revels, made history  
13 in 1870 in Reconstruction Mississippi when he was elected the  
14 country's first African-American U.S. Senator and later became  
15 the first president of Alcorn State University in Mississippi;  
16 her maternal grandmother was a suffragette and union activist  
17 and her maternal grandfather published the Seattle Republican,  
18 the city's first black newspaper; and

19

WHEREAS, The Caytons passed on their strong work ethic to  
20 their children and granddaughter; Susan Cayton Woodson's aunt,  
21 Madge, was one of the first black women to graduate from the  
22 University of Washington; her uncle, Horace, Jr., served as

1 director of Chicago's Parkway Community House, a  
2 social-service center in Bronzeville, and co-authored the 1945  
3 book Black Metropolis; her uncle, Revels Cayton, was a  
4 prominent labor and civil rights activist in San Francisco; her  
5 aunt, Lillie, became a counselor and spokesperson for  
6 Alcoholics Anonymous throughout the West Coast; and

7 WHEREAS, Following her grandfather's death in 1940, Susan  
8 Cayton moved to Chicago; she was entrusted for the long drive  
9 to Paul Robeson, a close family friend; she worked a  
10 switchboard at Parkway Community House and became involved in  
11 the Chicago Renaissance when black artists like Gwendolyn  
12 Brooks, Margaret Walker, Charles Wilbert White, and Richmond  
13 Barthe produced their early works; she counted among her  
14 friends such leading African-American cultural and political  
15 figures as Richard Wright, Langston Hughes, Gordon Parks,  
16 William Carter, Eldzier Cortor, Charles Sebree, Elizabeth  
17 Catlett, and Irene Clark; and

18 WHEREAS, Susan Cayton Woodson and Chicago businessman and  
19 chemist Harold Woodson were married in 1949; the couple raised  
20 a family together; and

21 WHEREAS, Susan Cayton Woodson was an avid collector of  
22 African-American art; her home became the site of the Susan C.  
23 Woodson Gallery of Chicago, which she created to allow her to

1 remain at home to care for her ailing husband; the gallery  
2 became the preeminent and internationally acclaimed collection  
3 of the Chicago Renaissance; and

4 WHEREAS, For more than three decades, Susan Cayton Woodson  
5 was one of the most devoted supporters of the Chicago Public  
6 Library's Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection; in 1983, she  
7 donated the Horace Cayton papers; in 1988, she organized the  
8 visual arts exhibit and programming for the first-ever exhibit  
9 on the Chicago Black Renaissance; the following year, she  
10 donated her own papers and those of her husband; she also  
11 served on the Board of the South Side Community Art Center for  
12 almost 40 years and, when they offered her the chance to take  
13 emeritus status, she insisted on remaining a working member of  
14 the Board; and

15 WHEREAS, Susan Cayton Woodson was preceded in death by her  
16 loving husband of 48 years, the late Harold W. Woodson; and

17 WHEREAS, Susan Cayton Woodson is survived by her son,  
18 Harold W. Woodson, Jr., (Virginia); her stepdaughter, Eleanor  
19 Kamuda; her grandson, Charles J. Woodson; her granddaughters,  
20 Melissa Waldon-Ongley (Ryan Stephen) and Meredith Kamuda; her  
21 great-granddaughter, Marley Rose Meanie; her nieces, Madge  
22 Cayton and Susie Cayton; her nephews, Leroy Revels Cayton and  
23 Richard Rice; her grandson-in-love, William K. Gilchrist; and

1 her daughters-in-love, Jan Spivey Gilchrist (Kelvin) and  
2 Derise Tolliver (Osofo); therefore, be it

3 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
4 NINETY-EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE  
5 SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that we mourn, along with her family  
6 and friends, the passing of Susan Cayton Woodson; and be it  
7 further

8 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
9 presented to the family of Susan Cayton Woodson as a symbol of  
10 our deep sympathy and great esteem.