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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate are saddened to learn of the death of former WBC Heavyweight Boxing Champion Kenneth Howard Norton, Sr., who passed away on September 18, 2013; and

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WHEREAS, Kenneth Norton, Sr. was born on August 9, 1943 to John and Ruth Norton and was raised in Jacksonville; he graduated from Jacksonville High School, where he was an outstanding athlete and earned several scholarships at Northeast Missouri State (now Truman State University) in football, basketball, and track; he studied elementary education while at college; and

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WHEREAS, Kenneth Norton, Sr. joined the United States Marine Corps during his sophomore year in college; while a Marine, he started boxing and compiled an amateur record of 24 and 2 and won the All-Marine Heavyweight Championship 3 times; he won the United States trials for the 1967 Pan American Games and began his pro career after his discharge from the Marines in 1967; and

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WHEREAS, Kenneth Norton, Sr. was nicknamed the "Black Hercules" until defeating Muhammad Ali and cracking his jaw in their 1973 bout, from which point he was known as "Jawbreaker";

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1 he finished with a professional record of 42-7-1, with 33  
2 knockouts; he was inducted into the International Boxing Hall  
3 of Fame in 1992 and is ranked 22nd among the 50th greatest  
4 heavyweights of all time; and

5 WHEREAS, Kenneth Norton, Sr., following his boxing career,  
6 appeared in various films and television series; he also worked  
7 as a television and radio sports commentator and was a member  
8 of the Sports Illustrated Speakers Bureau; he felt his greatest  
9 achievement was twice being named Father of the Year in 1977 by  
10 the Los Angeles Sentinel and the Los Angeles Times; and

11 WHEREAS, Kenneth Norton, Sr. was preceded in death by his  
12 parents; and

13 WHEREAS, Kenneth Norton, Sr. is survived by his wife, Rose  
14 Contant-Norton; his children, Keith, Kenneth Jr. (Angela),  
15 Brandon, Kenisha, and Kene Jon; his grandchildren, Brittney,  
16 Sabrina, Kenneth III, Michael, Kameron, Nicholas, Kayliana,  
17 Havana, and Kene Jon II; his step-children, Fabian and Chelsea;  
18 his sister, Sandy Verlinden; his former wives, Jeanette  
19 Henderson and Jacqueline Norton; his uncle, Abe Brown; and a  
20 host of loving family and friends; therefore, be it

21 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-EIGHTH GENERAL  
22 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of

1 Kenneth Howard Norton, Sr., and extend our sincere condolences  
2 to his family, friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be  
3 it further

4       RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
5 presented to the family of Kenneth Norton, Sr. as an expression  
6 of our deepest sympathy.