

1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives are honored to recognize milestone dates in
4 the lives of the citizens of the State of Illinois; and

5 WHEREAS, December 2001 marks the 50th anniversary of the
6 publication in the American Journal of Ophthalmology of Dr.
7 Thaddeus Szewczyk's discovery of the key to one of the most
8 devastating eye diseases affecting children in modern times;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, Dr. Szewczyk discovered the cause of retrolental
11 fibroplasia, now known as "incubator blindness", which
12 affected babies who were born prematurely and placed in
13 incubators in nurseries of hospitals; the disease affected
14 thousands of children and became the most common cause of
15 blindness in children enrolled in schools for the blind; and

16 WHEREAS, Dr. Szewczyk concluded in his December 1951
17 publication that the misuse of oxygen created a hypoxic
18 condition in the retina which resulted in the condition known
19 as retrolental fibroplasia and that careful use of oxygen was
20 the key to controlling the disease; and

21 WHEREAS, As a direct result of Dr. Szewczyk's discovery,
22 tens of thousands of premature babies have been spared from
23 blindness; and

24 WHEREAS, Dr. Szewczyk has never, in any fashion, actively
25 sought credit, recognition or compensation for his work on
26 retrolental fibroplasia; however, in 1976 he was awarded the
27 International Leslie-Dana Gold Medal by the St. Louis Society
28 for the Blind; and

29 WHEREAS, Dr. Szewczyk currently resides in Belleville,
30 Illinois with his wife of 57 years, Loretta; they are the
31 proud parents of Dennis Szewczyk, Stephen Szewczyk, Karen

1 Cahill, and Elaine Lawrence; Dr. Szewczyk worked as an eye
2 specialist in the Metro East area for over 30 years;
3 therefore, be it

4 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
5 NINETY-SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
6 we honor Dr. Thaddeus Szewczyk for his more than 50 years of
7 dedicated work to the cause of retrolental fibroplasia; and
8 be it further

9 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
10 presented to Dr. Thaddeus Szewczyk as an expression of our
11 esteem.