

1

HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives wish to recognize Abner Ganet's tremendous
4 contribution during World War II and his continuous work
5 educating today's young people about the ongoing struggle for
6 freedom; and

7 WHEREAS, Mr. Ganet landed in the D-Day invasion of
8 Normandy and fought in the lead division across Europe; he
9 was wounded and then returned to his unit to help capture
10 Aachen, the first German city taken on the Western front; his
11 entire unit was wiped out and he was promoted from a
12 one-stripe private first class to a platoon sergeant with
13 five stripes; Mr. Ganet was a 19-year-old American soldier
14 when he stepped inside the barracks guardroom of Buchenwald;
15 he held the painful memories of what he witnessed at bay and
16 was silent on the subject for 50 years; and

17 WHEREAS, In 1995, Mr. Ganet met Elie Wiesel, Holocaust
18 survivor and author; Mr. Ganet's unit liberated the
19 concentration camp the day that the fleeing Nazi army had
20 slated Mr. Wiesel and the other Jewish children to die in the
21 gas chamber; Mr. Wiesel told him that he must tell his story;
22 and

23 WHEREAS, After speaking with Mr. Wiesel, Vern Haase, a
24 1st Division photographer, offered Mr. Ganet copies of the
25 pictures he had taken during the war; later that same day, a
26 teacher at York High School asked Mr. Ganet to speak about
27 his experiences; Mr. Ganet decided he must talk to young
28 people about what he had witnessed firsthand; and

29 WHEREAS, Mr. Ganet has been sharing his stories and
30 pictures of Buchenwald and World War II with Chicago-area
31 students for the last 6 years; Mr. Ganet conveys the
32 atrocities he witnessed; he tells of how prominent local

1 citizens were brought to Buchenwald to witness the human
2 carnage; and he tells of Herman Goering's suicide in the
3 Nuremberg jail where Mr. Ganet was a guard; and

4 WHEREAS, He points out that the students interact with
5 'someone who was actually there, who cried, who threw up, who
6 was appalled by man's inhumanity to man'; he adds a personal
7 level to the student's studies of the Holocaust; he feels
8 that talking about the tragedy is even more relevant after
9 the September 11th attacks and wants a new generation of
10 soldiers who may be facing death and horror in Afghanistan to
11 know that their experiences should not be locked away; and

12 WHEREAS, Mr. Ganet married, had children, and served as
13 mayor of Elmhurst; he reunited with two war buddies at the
14 1st Infantry Division reunion last August; speaking of his
15 experiences has been rewarding and enlightening for the
16 countless number of young people Mr. Ganet has reached;
17 therefore, be it

18 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
19 NINETY-SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
20 we recognize the contributions and commitment of Abner Ganet;
21 and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
23 presented to Mr. Ganet with our sincere gratitude.