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LRB100 15263 MST 30807 r

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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 Reverend Donald Becker of Oak Park, who passed away on July 30, 2017, at the age of 89; and

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WHEREAS, Reverend Becker was born in Farley, Missouri to the Reverend Alvin and Martha Oetting Becker on May 28, 1928; he was baptized at St. John Lutheran Church in Farley and confirmed at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Campbell Hill; he graduated from St. Paul Lutheran High School and Junior College, a preparatory school for aspiring pastors; he entered Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri in 1948 and spent two years as a vicar in Lutheran churches in Japan and the Philippines; and

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WHEREAS, Reverend Becker was passionate about diversity in the church; it was during his time as a vicar that he decided to serve in churches that included diverse racial and cultural groups; he graduated from the seminary in 1954, becoming the pastor of St. John Lutheran Church in Emporium, Pennsylvania; from 1958 until 1996, he served as pastor of First Immanuel Lutheran Church on the near west side of Chicago; and

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WHEREAS, Reverend Becker married Carolyn Gresens on November 20, 1960 and their parish life and family life became

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1 inseparable; his wife supported his lifelong mission to end
2 prejudice along racial and economic lines, working with him as
3 deaconess, superintendent of work with children and youth, and
4 as an administrative assistant for the church; and

5 WHEREAS, Reverend Becker served as pastoral counselor for
6 more than a dozen inner-city Lutheran congregations; he was an
7 active participant in the 1960s civil rights movement and one
8 of his passions was to help the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
9 take an active role in racial integration and in civic and
10 political issues that affect the poor; and

11 WHEREAS, Reverend Becker was the recipient of the Seeds of
12 Hope Award from Wheat Ridge Ministries for his dedicated
13 service to the community; and

14 WHEREAS, After his retirement, Reverend Becker served as
15 the Urban Linkage Coordinator of the Northern Illinois District
16 of the Lutheran Church from 1997 to 2004; and

17 WHEREAS, Reverend Becker was preceded in death by his
18 parents; his siblings, Elfred (Hildegarde), Paul, Norbert,
19 Irma (Robert) Schmidt, and Leonard Becker; and his
20 brother-in-law, Arthur Crosmer; and

21 WHEREAS, Reverend Becker is survived by his beloved wife,

1 Carolyn; his children, David and Martin (Laura) Becker; his
2 siblings, Vera Crosmer, Marvin (Jean), and Robert (Gloria); his
3 sister-in-law, Gerry Becker; and many nieces and nephews and
4 great-nieces and great-nephews; therefore, be it

5 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDREDTH GENERAL
6 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
7 Reverend Donald Becker, and extend our sincere condolences to
8 his family, friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be it
9 further

10 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
11 presented to the family of Reverend Becker as an expression of
12 our deepest sympathy.