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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2           WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of  
3 Representatives wish to recognize and honor the first  
4 responders who 30 years ago gallantly fought the spectacular  
5 fire that destroyed Arlington Park Racecourse's clubhouse and  
6 grandstand; and

7           WHEREAS, Arlington International Racecourse opened in 1927  
8 as "Arlington Park" and was hailed by the Chicago Tribune as  
9 "the greatest racecourse in America and one of the greatest in  
10 the world", a reputation that still exists today; the current  
11 facility reopened in 1989 to reviews as one of the world's  
12 finest racing and entertainment venues; and

13           WHEREAS, During the ensuing years, many of racing's biggest  
14 and brightest stars competed at Arlington Park, including  
15 Armed, Bewitch, Buckpasser, Busher, Candy Spots, Cigar,  
16 Citation, Coaltown, Dr. Fager, Equipoise, John Henry, Nashua,  
17 Native Dancer, Round Table, Secretariat, Spectacular Bid,  
18 Swaps, Tom Rolfe, T. V. Lark, Twilight Tears, and Whirlaway;  
19 and

20           WHEREAS, In 1981, Arlington International Racecourse  
21 introduced the first million dollar thoroughbred race with the  
22 inaugural running of the Arlington Million won by the famous

1 John Henry and ridden by legendary jockey Bill Shoemaker; and

2 WHEREAS, On July 31, 1985, a fire broke out in the historic  
3 Post and Paddock Club at the track and soon spread to the  
4 entire grandstand and clubhouse; and

5 WHEREAS, 150 firefighters were called to this 5-alarm fire  
6 from the fire departments of Arlington Heights and 24 other  
7 northwest Illinois communities; and

8 WHEREAS, The fire soon engulfed the entire facility and  
9 exceeded the best efforts of the brave men and women to contain  
10 it; and

11 WHEREAS, The heroic efforts of these firefighters  
12 prevented the loss of any lives; and

13 WHEREAS, During the next 25 days after the fire, Arlington  
14 Park's owners, led by Richard L. Duchossois, worked 20 hours  
15 per day to clean away the 7,000 tons of steel and 14,000 tons  
16 of other debris and erected a tent village along with bleachers  
17 to enable the running of the Arlington Million on August 25,  
18 1985; and

19 WHEREAS, The 1985 Arlington Million is known as the  
20 "Miracle Million", which was won by a horse from Great Britain

1 named Teleprompter, owned by Lord Derby whose family's name is  
2 used for the Kentucky Derby and derbies throughout the world;  
3 and

4 WHEREAS, Arlington Park received the highest honor in  
5 racing - the Eclipse Award - in 1985 "in recognition of the  
6 indomitable spirit of the officers and staff for a 'Miracle';  
7 Well done"; and

8 WHEREAS, August 15, 2015 is the 30th Anniversary of the  
9 "Miracle Million"; and

10 WHEREAS, On July 31, 2015, Arlington International  
11 Racecourse is recognizing these firefighters for their efforts  
12 30 years ago in a special ceremony; therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
14 NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we  
15 honor the firefighters who fought this fire 30 years ago on  
16 July 31, 1985, and the owners and staff of Arlington  
17 International Racecourse for the achievement of conducting the  
18 Miracle Million on August 25, 1985; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be  
20 presented to the Arlington Heights Fire Department and to  
21 Arlington International Racecourse as an expression of our

1 esteem and respect.