



SR0596

LRB104 19946 LAW 33396 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 Ernie Baumann of Maywood, who passed away on December 28, 2025; and

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WHEREAS, Ernie Baumann was a tumbling instructor, an entrepreneur, a civil rights activist, an entertainer, and a community builder whose five-decade mission helped shape the lives of tens of thousands of children across Chicago's western suburbs and the West Side through Maywood Fine Arts; and

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WHEREAS, Ernie Baumann, born on April 9, 1939, was adopted and raised by a family in Western Springs; after graduating from Lyons Township High School, where he was a member of the gymnastics team, he served in the United States Navy; he proceeded to work as a house parent at a Lutheran children's home in Maywood, where he operated a small business, The Newspaper Store, which became a gathering place for commuters and creatives alike; he met his future wife, Lois Baumann, in 1966, and they married in 1967; and

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WHEREAS, Ernie and Lois Baumann first worked within the Maywood Recreation Department, where he taught tumbling and she taught dance, coordinating all-day park programming for

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1 neighborhood children; the couple then established the
2 Stairway of the Stars Dance Studio and Mr. Ernie's Flip, Flop
3 and Fly Tumbling School; and

4 WHEREAS, Ernie and Lois Baumann continued to pursue their
5 mission of keeping the arts accessible, affordable, and
6 centered on children by founding the nonprofit Maywood Fine
7 Arts in 1996; they faced a serious setback when Maywood Fine
8 Arts' beloved dance studio, housed in the former Maywood Opera
9 House, was destroyed by fire in 2010; through a grassroots
10 campaign called Raising the Barre and the efforts of students,
11 they were able to raise funds to rebuild; by 2016, they had a
12 new, \$2 million, state-of-the-art dance facility; and

13 WHEREAS, Ernie and Lois Baumann transformed Maywood Fine
14 Arts into one of the most enduring and inclusive youth arts
15 institutions in the region, an organization that today serves
16 thousands of children each week and has produced multiple
17 generations of alumni working across the arts, education, and
18 entertainment industries; and

19 WHEREAS, Ernie Baumann was a husband, father, grandfather,
20 mentor, and friend who will be remembered for the positive
21 impact he made on the arts, his community, and the lives of his
22 students; therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL
2 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
3 Ernie Baumann and extend our sincere condolences to his
4 family, friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be it
5 further

6 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
7 presented to the family of Ernie Baumann as an expression of
8 our deepest sympathy.