



SR0607

LRB104 18553 ECR 31996 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 Janis Arlene Sharpe, who passed away on January 8, 2026; and

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WHEREAS, Rev. Sharpe was born in Chicago on April 11, 1936; she was raised on Chicago's Southside; she received multiple degrees and certifications, including master's degrees in Christian Education and Divinity from Northern Baptist Theological Seminary; and

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WHEREAS, Rev. Sharpe served as an ordained elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church and as senior pastor and director of the Sojourner Truth Learning Center, formerly known as St. Mark Day Care and After School Program, providing employment, care, and educational support to countless families in the community; she, along with her husband, co-founded what would become St. Mark AME Church on Chicago's West Side, and she continued to serve at Carey Tercentenary AME Church in her later years; and

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WHEREAS, Rev. Sharpe held numerous leadership roles within the City of Chicago during both administrations of Mayor Richard M. Daley, including on the Chicago Board of Education and as a pension trustee; she also worked extensively in

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1 political advocacy, believing deeply that faith and justice
2 must walk hand in hand; and

3 WHEREAS, Rev. Sharpe's work as a playwright, producer, and
4 choir director produced original productions that filled
5 sanctuaries and inspired people across Chicago; and

6 WHEREAS, Rev. Sharpe was a lifelong servant-leader whose
7 faith, intellect, and courage shaped generations across
8 Chicago and beyond; she was a revered pastor, educator,
9 playwright, and civic leader who devoted more than six decades
10 to ministry, community development, and public service; and

11 WHEREAS, Rev. Sharpe was preceded in death by her
12 daughter, Paulette Elizabeth Ragland; and

13 WHEREAS, Rev. Sharpe leaves behind a large and loving
14 family, two congregations, and a vast, spiritual community;
15 therefore, be it

16 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL
17 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
18 Reverend Janis Arlene Sharpe and extend our sincere
19 condolences to her family, friends, and all who knew and loved
20 her; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
2 presented to the family of Rev. Sharpe as an expression of our
3 deepest sympathy.