



HJ0059

LRB102 18115 MST 25344 r

1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, It is highly fitting that the Illinois General
3 Assembly pays honor and respect to the truly great individuals
4 who have served our country; and

5 WHEREAS, Earl Williams Riggins was born in Champaign to
6 Carl and Marie Kobel Riggins on November 16, 1924; he
7 graduated from Champaign High School in 1942 and enlisted in
8 the U.S. Marines; and

9 WHEREAS, Earl Riggins served aboard the USS Indianapolis,
10 which was torpedoed and sank while out at sea on July 30, 1945;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, Earl Riggins survived for five nights and four
13 days in the shark-infested waters of the South Pacific; he was
14 one of 317 survivors out of a crew of 1,197; and

15 WHEREAS, Earl Riggins married Dorothy Wright of Champaign
16 on March 1, 1947, and they spent much of their lives farming in
17 Newman with their three children, Steve, Linda, and Judy; they
18 retired to Oakland in 1989, eventually moving to the Primrose
19 Retirement Center in Decatur; and

20 WHEREAS, Earl Riggins was an active member in the USS

1 Indianapolis Survivor Organization and participated in many
2 reunions and numerous events to tell the "Indy Story"; he was
3 also active in the American Legion in Newman and the VFW in
4 Oakland, where he developed special bonds with many members of
5 both groups; and

6 WHEREAS, Earl Riggins was a member of the Douglas County
7 Farm Bureau, where he served on the board of directors for
8 several years; both he and Dorothy were members of the Oakland
9 Methodist Church; and

10 WHEREAS, Earl Riggins spent most of his adult life as a
11 horse enthusiast; he was a member of the Illinois Quarter
12 Horse Association and showed in events throughout the United
13 States from the 1970s to 2000s; he also enjoyed trail riding
14 with friends; and

15 WHEREAS, Earl Riggins enjoyed spending time with his
16 family; he loved fishing in Canada, teaching his children and
17 grandchildren horse riding, and watching his grandchildren
18 play basketball; and

19 WHEREAS, Earl Riggins's stories of the "Indy" and of his
20 life's travels will be remembered and treasured by all; and

21 WHEREAS, Earl Riggins passed away on February 23, 2011;

1 and

2 WHEREAS, At the time of his passing, Earl Riggins was
3 survived by his wife, Dorothy; his children, Steve Riggins and
4 Judy Riggins Whalen; three grandchildren; two
5 great-grandchildren; and his brother, Richard Riggins; he was
6 preceded in death by his brother, Paul Riggins, and his
7 daughter, Linda Riggins; therefore, be it

8 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
9 HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE
10 SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that we designate Illinois Route 36
11 as it travels through Newman as the "Earl Riggins Memorial
12 Highway-Survivor USS Indianapolis"; and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That the Illinois Department of Transportation
14 is requested to erect, at suitable locations consistent with
15 State and federal regulations, appropriate plaques or signs
16 giving notice of the name "Earl Riggins Memorial
17 Highway-Survivor USS Indianapolis"; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
19 presented to the family of Earl Riggins, the Mayor of Newman,
20 and the Secretary of the Illinois Department of
21 Transportation.