



HR0847

LRB102 27385 ECR 39175 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives are saddened to learn of the death of Desiree
4 F. Gardner-Sankey, who passed away on April 12, 2022; and

5 WHEREAS, Desiree Gardner-Sankey was born to Shirley and
6 Nettie J. Fortenberry in Columbia, Mississippi on July 4,
7 1931; in an environment of separate schools and segregated
8 lunch counters, she excelled both as a student and star
9 athlete at Burglund High School in McComb, Mississippi; in her
10 senior year, she led her all-girls basketball team to win the
11 state's Big Ten Championship; she married James H. Sankey Sr.,
12 and their long marriage was one of love and laughter; and

13 WHEREAS, While in high school, Desiree Gardner-Sankey
14 worked as a window decorator at a local clothing store and was
15 soon trained to become a store clerk; on her first day as a
16 salesperson, every white salesperson refused to work with her,
17 walked off the floor, and resigned; after moving to Chicago to
18 escape the oppression of the South, she worked at Roxy
19 Cleaners on 43rd Street; later, she worked the overnight shift
20 at Montgomery Ward, followed by a short stint at Spencer Press
21 until the press relocated to Westmont; in 1965, she began her
22 notable career at the U.S. Post Office as a part-time employee
23 but quickly rose through the ranks to become a supervisor at

1 the Bedford Park Facility; she retired after 43 years of
2 service in 2008; and

3 WHEREAS, Desiree Gardner-Sankey joined the Faith Community
4 of Saint Sabina in 1967 and became a faithful and devoted
5 member, sacrificing to send her three children and a grandson
6 to Catholic schools; and

7 WHEREAS, Desiree Gardner-Sankey was a woman of deep faith
8 and deep compassion; she had always held a desire to become a
9 nurse and, through her life, exhibited a deep compassion and
10 caring for others, especially the elderly; she had an inner
11 core of strength and resilience, as evidenced by her ability
12 to persevere through all circumstances; she was a woman of
13 wonder, dignity, determination, elegance, and grace who
14 selflessly served her family, her community, and her faith;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, Desiree Gardner-Sankey is survived by her
17 husband, James; her daughters, Jacqueline Y. Collins, Kai Yael
18 (Andrew) Gardner-Mishlove, LaVese (Glenn) Jordan, and Shirley
19 (Derrick) Wilkerson; her son, Sean M. Gardner; her brother,
20 Earl C. Fortenberry; her grandchildren, Yolanda (Allen), Sean
21 J. (Marniece), Berhane, Surya, Jnana, Dionta, Shantai,
22 Brianna, Ava, Marlon, and Miracle; her nephews, Rock (Carla)
23 Anderson and Earl (Georgia) Fortenberry Jr.; her nieces,

1 Shirley (Rodney) Williams and Chervonda Fortenberry; her
2 cousins, Barbara (Leo) Lowery, Billy McCorkle Sr., Patsy
3 Jefferson, and Mary Jacobs (Earl) Oubre; her
4 great-grandchildren; her great-nieces and great-nephews; her
5 cousins; her friends; and her special schnauzer, Sasha;
6 therefore, be it

7 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
8 HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
9 we mourn the passing of Desiree F. Gardner-Sankey and extend
10 our sincere condolences to her family, friends, and all who
11 knew and loved her; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
13 presented to the family of Desiree Gardner-Sankey as an
14 expression of our deepest sympathy.