



HR0858

LRB103 41219 LAW 74436 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives wish to recognize the life of John Briggs, the first Black hotel owner of the City of Rockford; and

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WHEREAS, John Briggs was born in Augusta, Georgia on April 18, 1894; he served in the U.S. Army during World War I; following his military service, he eventually settled in Rockford, Illinois, where he became a distinguished hotel and resort business owner, a community builder, and a guiding light for African-American businesses; and

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WHEREAS, John Briggs was the owner of the Briggs Hotel on 629 Court Street in Rockford from 1938 to 1959, and his hotel became known as the first home to many African Americans migrating from the south to Rockford; his hotel also gained the distinction of being listed in The Negro Motorist Green-Book, an annual, national guidebook that assisted Black travelers with finding hospitable locations and businesses during the era of Jim Crow laws; and

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WHEREAS, John Briggs achieved success in other entrepreneurial ventures; he owned and operated The Briggs Mounds resort at Lake Koshkonong in Wisconsin and Club Morocco at Briggs Farms in Rockford, where he hosted the well-regarded

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1 Briggs Picnics; he was also a distinguished member of the  
2 Booker Washington Community Center; and

3 WHEREAS, Over the course of his professional life, John  
4 Briggs made outstanding contributions to the African-American  
5 community of Rockford and was regarded as a local leader known  
6 for his commitment to advancing and helping others; he passed  
7 away on April 24, 1959; and

8 WHEREAS, John Briggs' legacy has been and continues to be  
9 celebrated by the City of Rockford, which previously  
10 proclaimed the month of April 2021 as John Briggs Month and  
11 also declared a John Briggs Day, and his impact was further  
12 immortalized with the official renaming of a portion of Court  
13 Street as John Briggs Way by the Rockford City Council in  
14 February 2024; therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE  
16 HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
17 we recognize the life of John Briggs, the first Black hotel  
18 owner of the City of Rockford, and his impact on and historical  
19 significance to the Rockford community; and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
21 presented to the great-great-niece of John Briggs, Dr. Brandi  
22 DeShawn Brown, as an expression of our esteem and respect.