



HR0865

LRB103 41561 LAW 74780 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 Susan
4 "Sue" Duncan of Chicago, who passed away on July 9, 2024; and

5 WHEREAS, Sue Duncan was born to Betsey and William Morton
6 in Winchester, Massachusetts on December 31, 1934; she
7 received a Bachelor of Arts in English from Smith College in
8 1955 and a Master of Arts in English from University of
9 Wisconsin in 1957; she became a resident of Hyde Park in
10 Chicago in 1959; she married Starkey Duncan Jr., Ph.D., and
11 they had three children, later divorcing in 1995 after 35
12 years of marriage; and

13 WHEREAS, For over 50 years, Sue Duncan served as an
14 educator and mother figure to thousands of children from some
15 of the poorest neighborhoods on Chicago's South Side; she
16 initially taught high school English in Cleveland for two
17 years and at City Colleges of Chicago for one year; after
18 witnessing the inequities in education faced by many Black
19 children in Chicago, she opened the Sue Duncan Children's
20 Center at a church in the Kenwood neighborhood in 1961; over
21 the years, she moved the after-school program between several
22 church basements before eventually settling into three
23 classrooms at Jackie Robinson Elementary School in 2003,

1 expanding her program to include six teachers, four
2 assistants, 12 work-study students, and a cadre of volunteers
3 and the establishment of a board of directors; and

4 WHEREAS, Sue Duncan donated her time and personal
5 resources while operating the Sue Duncan Children's Center;
6 she enriched her students' lives through tutoring, fulfilled
7 their basic needs through supplying clothing and food when
8 needed, and ensured they had better educational opportunities
9 through arranging scholarships; in the process, she instilled
10 the values of consistency and hard work in her students, with
11 many becoming positive influences on society as engineers,
12 doctors, lawyers, educators, philanthropists, police officers,
13 firefighters, servicemen and women, athletes, actors,
14 musicians, community leaders, and business owners; she
15 continued to actively serve the center until her retirement in
16 2011; post-retirement, and despite memory loss, she could
17 still be found assisting the program in various ways,
18 including passing out gifts to children during the holidays
19 and attending the center's annual Fall Fete fundraiser; and

20 WHEREAS, Sue Duncan was the recipient of a number of
21 accolades, including receiving a UNICEF Humanitarian Award and
22 being the focus of Remember Me Sue, a 2014 documentary
23 exploring her life and work; and

1 WHEREAS, Sue Duncan was an extraordinary, modest, and
2 courageous individual whose impact on education in Chicago and
3 the lives of her former students will reverberate for
4 generations; and

5 WHEREAS, Sue Duncan is survived by her children, former
6 U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, Sarah Duncan, and
7 Owen Duncan, and nine grandchildren; therefore, be it

8 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
9 HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
10 we mourn the passing of Susan "Sue" Duncan and extend our
11 sincere condolences to her family, friends, and all who knew
12 and loved her; and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
14 presented to the family of Sue Duncan as an expression of our
15 deepest sympathy.