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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 James R. Pobiega, who passed away on September 12, 2023 at the age of 73; and

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WHEREAS, James Pobiega was born in Oak Park on August 23, 1950 to Michael Pobiega, who drove a milk truck, and Alice Pobiega, who held several jobs including working as a secretary for a roofing company; and

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WHEREAS, James Pobiega attended Argo High School in Summit, where he earned the nickname Beowulf due to his large stature, which was later changed to Little Howlin Wolf by passersby who would toss money in his saxophone case as he played music on the Michigan Avenue bridge; and

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WHEREAS, James Pobiega, a self-taught saxophonist, began busking at Chicago's Old Maxwell Street Market as he graduated high school in 1968; and

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WHEREAS, James Pobiega studied acting at the Goodman School of Drama and joined his instructor, Patrick Henry, and several classmates to form the Free Street Theater in 1969, which performed around Chicago and the Midwest region; and

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1           WHEREAS, James Pobiega worked as Santa Claus at Water  
2 Tower Place in Chicago; he enjoyed scuba diving as a hobby and  
3 as an instructor and had bit parts in a few productions,  
4 including a goofy music video with Tim Kazurinsky and the  
5 Chevy Chase movie Bad Meat; and

6           WHEREAS, James Pobiega's true passion was music, and he  
7 self-released dozens of singles and three albums, two in the  
8 1980s and one in 2005; although his music was never  
9 commercially successful, it found a wider audience in the  
10 early 2000s after Twig Harper, a musician who was working at an  
11 antique store in Wicker Park, bought one of his self-released  
12 albums at a Chicago Thrift shop and circulated it among  
13 friends in the underground experimental music scene; and

14           WHEREAS, James Pobiega was preceded in death by his  
15 parents; and

16           WHEREAS, At the time of his passing, James Pobiega was  
17 survived by his sister, Patricia Pobiega; his cousins,  
18 Kathleen Rehr and Bobby Pobiega; and numerous friends;  
19 therefore, be it

20           RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL  
21 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of  
22 James Pobiega and extend our sincere condolences to his

1 family, friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be it  
2 further

3       RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
4 presented to the family of James Pobiega as an expression of  
5 our deepest sympathy.