



SR1222

LRB103 42749 MST 75987 r

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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 Brigadier General (Ret.) Walter James Whitfield of Phoenix, Arizona, who passed away on August 16, 2024; and

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WHEREAS, Walter Whitfield was born in Jackson, Mississippi to Buster and Willie Whitfield on November 5, 1948, and his family relocated to Chicago's West Side when he was eight; he graduated from Tilden Technical High School in 1966 and attended Chicago's City Colleges; he enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1967 and qualified for Officer Candidate School, leading to a commission as a second lieutenant in the field artillery division; and

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WHEREAS, Walter Whitfield's military career was exemplary; he served with distinction, earning promotions from captain during the Vietnam War to brigadier general of the 33rd Separate Infantry Brigade in the Illinois Army National Guard; he was recognized as the first Black brigadier general in the Illinois National Guard in 1992; his military service spanned 41 years, culminating in his retirement on October 1, 1997 from the Illinois National Guard as a brigadier general; and

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WHEREAS, Walter Whitfield made significant contributions

1 in the engineering field; he worked as an electrical engineer
2 for Furnas Electric in Illinois from 1977 to 1995 and later as
3 a division solar engineer for Kyocera in Arizona until his
4 retirement in 2017; and

5 WHEREAS, Walter Whitfield was a lifetime member and served
6 as Exalted Ruler of William H. Patterson Elks Lodge #477; he
7 was also a lifetime member of Travis L. Williams American
8 Legion Post #1710 and a dedicated member of VFW Post #65, where
9 he served as post commander for two years; and

10 WHEREAS, Walter Whitfield committed to his faith at an
11 early age and was an active and dedicated member of the Mt.
12 Hebron Missionary Baptist Church; he remained rooted in his
13 faith throughout his life, and upon moving to Phoenix, he
14 joined the First Institutional Baptist Church, where he
15 participated in the men's ministry, attending retreats and
16 conferences; and

17 WHEREAS, Walter Whitfield was preceded in death by his
18 parents; his brother, Elbert Lee Jefferson; and his sister,
19 Willa B. Sotherland; and

20 WHEREAS, Walter Whitfield is survived by his beloved wife,
21 Jackie Platt-Whitfield; his stepson, Deon Platt; his grandson,
22 Sheldon Platt; his children from previous relationships, Eric

1 Williams Sr., Gavin (Jae) Whitfield, and Shani Whitfield; his
2 grandchildren, Eric Williams Jr. and Mecca Whitfield; his
3 favorite nephew, Rayburn (Delanor) Tucker; and numerous
4 nieces, nephews, cousins, friends, and former colleagues;
5 therefore, be it

6 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL
7 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
8 Brigadier General (Ret.) Walter James Whitfield and extend our
9 sincere condolences to his family, friends, and all who knew
10 and loved him; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
12 presented to the family of Walter Whitfield as an expression
13 of our deepest sympathy.