

1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The General Assembly takes pride in recognizing
3 the accomplishments and contributions of Illinois officials
4 and citizens; and

5 WHEREAS, In honor of the lasting legacy and many
6 sacrifices that Judge Michael Anthony Bilandic made for the
7 citizenry of the State of Illinois, the General Assembly
8 would like to recognize him with the rare honor of naming a
9 public building after this former official; and

10 WHEREAS, Michael Anthony Bilandic was one of the more
11 influential and highly regarded public figures in Chicago,
12 serving as Mayor of Chicago from 1976 to 1979 and later as
13 Chief Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court; he was a man of
14 commitment and a loyal Chicagoan; most importantly, he was
15 devoted to his family, faithful to his church, and proud of
16 his Croatian heritage; he died on January 16, 2002, at the
17 age of 78; he is survived by his wife Heather, son Michael,
18 brothers Steve and Nick, and sister Eleanor; and

19 WHEREAS, Born on February 13, 1923 to Croatian
20 immigrants, Justice Bilandic grew up in the Bridgeport
21 community where he attended St. Jerome Grammar School (class
22 of '36) and De La Salle High School; after receiving a
23 Bachelor of Science degree from St. Mary's College, he
24 attended DePaul University College of Law where he earned a
25 Juris Doctor degree; during WWII, he courageously served as a
26 First Lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps; and

27 WHEREAS, Justice Bilandic's political career was rich and
28 diverse, including service in all three branches of
29 government over four decades; he began his long and
30 distinguished public service career in 1969 when his
31 neighbors elected him to represent them as Alderman of the
32 11th Ward in Chicago; as a member of the City Council,

1 Alderman Bilandic pushed for the passage of many initiatives
2 designed to protect the city's environment, including a ban
3 on harmful lead-based paint and on phosphates in laundry
4 detergent, and the passage of the Lakefront Protection
5 Ordinance; considered an expert in government finance, he
6 rose to serve as Chairman of the city's Finance Committee and
7 later became floor leader; and

8 WHEREAS, In 1976, Bilandic was selected by his colleagues
9 to serve as Mayor of Chicago; he was elected to that office
10 in 1977, and held the post until 1979; as Mayor, he continued
11 to be an innovator in the area of enhancing the city; he
12 organized the first ChicagoFest, which was the precursor of
13 many current festivals, and lent his support to the Chicago
14 Marathon, which has become one of the premier running events
15 in the world; he arranged the city-insured, low-interest
16 mortgage loans for middle-income families in order to make
17 the city more appealing to families; his wise and intelligent
18 concern for the good of Chicago is evident in his
19 accomplishments; and

20 WHEREAS, Bilandic returned to private law practice in
21 1979, and was widely respected for his keen intellect and
22 exceptional insight into the intricacies of corporate law; a
23 new career was begun with his election to the 1st District
24 Appellate court and, in 1990, with his election to the
25 highest judicial office, the Illinois Supreme Court, where he
26 served as Chief Justice from 1994 through 1996; Justice
27 Bilandic will always be remembered for his long years of
28 unselfish public service, characterized by his decency,
29 intelligence, and integrity; the legacy of Bilandic's
30 dedication, devotion, and hard work serve as an example to
31 all; a group of Chicago aldermen led the effort to rename the
32 State of Illinois Building after him; and

33 WHEREAS, While much of Michael Bilandic's life was often

1 consumed by his outstanding legal and political career, he
2 possessed a great passion for his family and heritage; both
3 of his parents came to the United States from Croatia in the
4 early 1900s; his mother, "Minnie" (Lebedina), came from the
5 village of Bobovisce on the island of Brac, Croatia; his
6 father, Mate Bilandzic (later changed to Bilandic),
7 immigrated from Dicmo, a village near Sinj, Croatia; he
8 shared his family roots with his wife and son, and often
9 visited Croatia; and

10 WHEREAS, Following a peaceful and dignified family
11 funeral service, Justice Bilandic was quietly and humbly
12 buried beside his parents at St. Mary Cemetery; his wife
13 described him as "a devoted family man (who) also loved
14 Chicago and its people, was proud of his Croatian heritage,
15 and grateful for the opportunities which this country
16 provided to his family"; he was a gentle soul, a man of
17 integrity, honor, and dignity, who brought gentleness and
18 respect into the fields of government, law, politics, and all
19 aspects of his life; and

20 WHEREAS, Justice Michael A. Bilandic made vital
21 contributions of service and merit to the State of Illinois
22 and to the State's citizens and deserves to have his
23 achievements noted and remembered by current and future
24 generations, as his memory is now honored by the General
25 Assembly; therefore, be it

26 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
27 NINETY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE
28 SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that we rename the State of
29 Illinois Building at 160 North La Salle Street in Chicago in
30 honor of Michael Bilandic; and in implementing this honor, we
31 designate that State building as the Michael Bilandic
32 Building; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this preamble and
2 resolution be presented to the Director of Central Management
3 Services.