



1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives were saddened to learn of the death of William
4 Leslie Brown of Chicago; and

5 WHEREAS, Mr. Brown was born on November 24, 1940; he grew
6 up in Doraville, Georgia, before moving in 1968 to Chicago
7 where he subsequently became a strong leader and articulate
8 advocate for homeless families and individuals and for
9 low-income people who struggle to avoid homelessness; and

10 WHEREAS, In 1980, with the help of Jewish Council on Urban
11 Affairs, Catholic Charities, and his then employer the
12 Travelers and Immigrants Aid Society, Les Brown founded the
13 Chicago Coalition for the Homeless and became its first board
14 president; and

15 WHEREAS, In 1988, he left his position as Director of
16 Social Work Services at the Travelers and Immigrants Aid
17 Society to become Executive Director of the Chicago Coalition
18 for the Homeless; and

19 WHEREAS, He continued to serve the Chicago Coalition for
20 the Homeless as Director of Policy and was the Coalition's
21 chief strategist and "idea man" until his untimely death from
22 cancer on April 11; and

23 WHEREAS, In his various positions of leadership, Les Brown
24 employed his great sense of humor coupled with gentleness and
25 respect for all individuals; and

26 WHEREAS, He became an accomplished jazz and blues pianist
27 and used his musical skills to draw people to share his concern
28 for poor and low-income people; and

1 WHEREAS, He artfully combined work and fun and repeatedly
2 expressed his thanks and appreciation for the skills of medical
3 professionals and a gift of a transplanted heart in 1984 that
4 enabled him to work and live fully for an additional 20-plus
5 years; and

6 WHEREAS, Les Brown founded Growing Home and cleverly used
7 federal law to get the U.S. government to give it land in
8 Chicago and then in Marseilles, where it teaches agriculture
9 skills and operates a model job-training program that has
10 graduated 60 formerly homeless individuals over the past four
11 years; and

12 WHEREAS, He was a founder and former president of the
13 Illinois Coalition for the Homeless, a founding board member of
14 the weekly newspaper, Streetwise, and a steering committee
15 member of the Homeless Prevention Project, the Illinois
16 Coordinating Council on the Homeless, and the City Task Force
17 on Homelessness; a board member of the Public Welfare Coalition
18 and Center for Economic Progress; a member of the Chicago
19 Low-Income Housing Trust Fund Group and the Illinois Department
20 of Children and Family Services' Advisory Committee on Youth
21 Homelessness, and a former board member of the National
22 Coalition for the Homeless; and

23 WHEREAS, His passing will be deeply felt by his family,
24 friends, and co-workers, especially his wife, Diana Leifer; his
25 son, Jesse Brown, and his daughter, Mari Herreras-Zinman; his
26 sister, Claudia Lewis; and his grandson and granddaughter;
27 therefore, be it

28 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
29 NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
30 we mourn the death of Les Brown along with all who knew and
31 loved him and extend our sincerest condolences to his family
32 and friends; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
2 presented to his family as an expression of our deepest
3 sympathy.