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HOUSE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The members of the House of Representatives of the State of Illinois learned with regret of the death of Dr. James Walker, the first African-American person to serve as president of the two-campus, 35,000-student Southern Illinois University system (SIU), on Sunday, February 5, 2006; and

WHEREAS, An Alabama native, Dr. Walker was a graduate of Pennsylvania State University's doctoral program in education and was the co-author of a book, "Behavior Management: A Practical Approach for Education", which is in its eighth edition; he authored several journal articles related to special education and educational psychology; and

WHEREAS, He earned his bachelor's degree in biology from Alabama State University and a Masters in Special Education from Atlanta University; he was a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Alabama in Higher Education Administration and was also a graduate of the Harvard University Institute for Educational Management; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Walker came to SIU from the president's job at Middle Tennessee State University in 2000; he was recognized as one of the most accomplished and dedicated higher education professionals in this country; he is remembered by his successor at SIU as a caring and decent man who accomplished a great deal for Southern Illinois University through his positive outlook on life and his wonderful sense of humor and is credited with providing stable and experienced leadership to the SIU system at a critical point in its history; and

WHEREAS, Upon arriving at SIU in 2000, President Walker formed a committee known as the "2020 Vision Committee" composed of an external group of nationally recognized educators and community leaders; chaired by the late Senator

1 Paul Simon, the committee developed a set of recommendations  
2 designed to chart the way for SIU as it moved into the 21st  
3 century; in September of 2002 the "2020 Vision Committee"  
4 issued its report, which included 42 specific recommendations  
5 to move the University forward during the next two decades; the  
6 report guided much of the President's administrative planning  
7 and decision-making processes during his tenure at SIU; and

8 WHEREAS, President Walker's many visits to Springfield and  
9 Washington, D.C., gained him respect and stature among State  
10 and federal elected officials; key members of the Illinois  
11 Congressional delegation, working together with Dr. Walker,  
12 secured millions in federal research grants in the areas of  
13 coal, agriculture, bio-fuels, health care, and education  
14 during his tenure; and

15 WHEREAS, His discussions and relationships with key State  
16 officials assisted the University in securing more than \$110  
17 million in State appropriations for capital funding during his  
18 tenure; key projects included the \$12 million renovation of  
19 Altgeld Hall and Old Baptist Foundation, the \$35 million  
20 renovation of Morris Library, the new construction of the \$30  
21 million School of Medicine Combined Laboratory Facility in  
22 Springfield, the \$21 million Cancer Institute that will break  
23 ground this year, and the \$20 million Corn to Ethanol National  
24 Research Plant at SIUE; during his tenure at SIU, private  
25 contributions to the university's foundation rose by 30%; and

26 WHEREAS, President Walker was also instrumental in raising  
27 student scholarship funds; his Presidential Scholarship Fund  
28 annually rewarded academic excellence and resulted in some of  
29 the best young minds in the State enrolling at SIU's campuses;  
30 and

31 WHEREAS, He also initiated efforts to foster greater  
32 cooperation between the Carbondale and Edwardsville campuses;

1 his Task Force for the Identification and Development of  
2 Collaborative Opportunities resulted in significant  
3 improvements in maximizing resources and strengths of SIU as  
4 one university; his work in this area resulted in successful  
5 joint coordination of federal research funding efforts in rural  
6 health care programs including medicine, nursing, dental  
7 medicine, and allied health work; in the area of budget,  
8 administrative, and legal services, President Walker's  
9 streamlining initiatives resulted in a 28% reduction in  
10 University administrative costs over the last two years of his  
11 service; and

12 WHEREAS, President Walker was also aggressive in working  
13 with the Chancellors of the Carbondale and Edwardsville  
14 campuses in pursuing new programs and capital projects funded  
15 with university resources, including the new SIUE Pharmacy  
16 School and the recently approved expansion of the SIU  
17 governmental internship program; and

18 WHEREAS, President Walker was a member of numerous higher  
19 education professional organizations and served on the boards  
20 of several of these associations, including the American  
21 Association of State Colleges and Universities and the American  
22 Council on Education; he also served as chair of the NCAA  
23 Division I Athletics Certification Committee; he was involved  
24 in Rotary International, the United Way, Boy Scouts of America,  
25 and the American Heart Association; and

26 WHEREAS, He spent more than three decades in higher  
27 education; he took the position at SIU after serving at Middle  
28 Tennessee State University, where he was president for ten  
29 years; prior to becoming president at MTSU, he was Provost and  
30 Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of  
31 Northern Colorado; he moved through the ranks from assistant  
32 professor, department chair, dean, provost, and vice president  
33 for academic affairs to president; and

1           WHEREAS, The passing of Dr. James Walker has been deeply  
2           felt by many lives that he touched, especially his wife, Gwenn,  
3           and his two daughters; therefore, be it

4           RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
5           NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
6           we mourn the passing of Dr. James Walker, and we extend our  
7           sincere condolences to his family, friends, and all who knew  
8           and loved him; and be it further

9           RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
10          presented to his family as an expression of our deepest  
11          sympathy.