



1

SENATE RESOLUTION

2

WHEREAS, The members of the Senate of the State of Illinois learned with deep regret of the death of Dr. LaRona Jane Morris on Saturday, July 2, 2005; and

3

4

5

WHEREAS, LaRona Jane Walls was born on November 16, 1942, to James Clark Walls and Norma Slack Walls; she attended Dunbar Elementary, Hughes Quinn Junior High, and graduated from East St. Louis Senior High in January of 1960; she attended the Mildred Louis Business College and began working at Scott Air Force Base; and

6

7

8

9

10

11

WHEREAS, On February 11, 1962, she married Mr. Oreido (Perry) Morris; she received her bachelor's degree in business education and her master's degree in counseling education, both from Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville; in 1988, she earned a doctorate in educational administration and higher education from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, along with her sister, Dr. Stephanie Carpenter; and

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

WHEREAS, While an undergraduate student, Dr. Morris became a member of the Gamma Beta Chapter of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority in Edwardsville; her activism in her local chapter and leadership skills launched a trajectory of sorority service that gained her regional and national attention; her accomplishments as International Grand Anti-Grammateus/Secretary of Board led to her election as the 18th Grand Basileus in 1996; and

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

WHEREAS, During her directorship, she was responsible for the conception and initiation of Operation Book Bag, a program that provided school supplies to disadvantaged children; it was also under these auspices that she created an adolescent youth symposium to address the problems of today's youth; a Sigma legacy herself, she was pleased to have led many family members

27

28

29

30

31

1 and friends into Sigma's circle of sisterhood and to have her
2 legacy live on; and

3 WHEREAS, After working for many years as a civilian at
4 Scott Air Force Base, Dr. Morris became involved both civically
5 and politically in an unparalleled manner; beginning as a
6 Special Assistant to James E. Williams, Sr., the first
7 African-American mayor of East St. Louis, she represented the
8 city on numerous radio talk shows and public events, which
9 helped to hone her skills as a gifted orator; she also served
10 as Deputy City Clerk and Legislative Assistant to the East St.
11 Louis City Council; and

12 WHEREAS, Her love of education and commitment to youth led
13 to employment as a Special Assistant to the St. Clair County
14 Regional Superintendent of Schools for 13 years; she served as
15 assistant principal, and then principal, of the Edward H. Wirth
16 Middle School, Cahokia School District No. 187; she also worked
17 as an assistant principal at Cahokia High School, where she
18 oversaw the alternative program; and

19 WHEREAS, She was elected to the East St. Louis Board of
20 Education, School District No. 189, in 1997 and was a member of
21 the reform team that facilitated many changes in the District;
22 she was especially proud of chairing the School Uniform
23 committee and realizing the successful adoption and
24 implementation of the K-12 mandate for school uniforms; she
25 also spearheaded the inclusion of the JROTC as a vital part of
26 the high school program; and

27 WHEREAS, She won a second term in 2001, but resigned to
28 serve as assistant principal of her alma mater, East St. Louis
29 Senior High School; she was later employed as the principal of
30 Clark Junior High School; during her leisure time, she enjoyed
31 roller skating, collecting and reading comic books, and working
32 jigsaw puzzles; she had a lifelong affiliation with the Church

1 of God in Christ Congregational Church; and

2 WHEREAS, In addition to her sorority involvement, she
3 participated in numerous civic activities and organizations,
4 including the NAACP, Illinois Women Administrators, National
5 Council of Negro Women, Business and Professional Women, The
6 East St. Louis Principals Association, the American Institute
7 of Parliamentarians, the Optimists, Order of the Eastern Star,
8 Order of the Elks, Girl Scouts, and Boy Scouts; her educational
9 affiliations include Phi Delta Kappa Educational Fraternity,
10 Pi Lambda Theta Honor Society, and American MENSA, Ltd.;
11 because of her public service, professional contributions, and
12 political endeavors, she received over 150 honors and awards,
13 including acknowledgements in "Ebony", "Jet", and "Black
14 Enterprise" magazines; and

15 WHEREAS, She loved family and in 1988 founded, organized,
16 and incorporated Dozens of Cousins, Inc., a connection of the
17 Cason, Slack, Lawrence, and Anderson families; this 500 member
18 organization sponsors biennial reunions across the United
19 States; and

20 WHEREAS, The passing of Larona Jane Walls Morris has been
21 deeply felt by many, especially her husband, Oreido; her
22 children, Bryant (Winona), Ricci, and Crystal (William)
23 Wilson; her mother, Norma Slack Walls; her grandchildren,
24 Brianne, Angel LaRona, Crystal M. Morris, Mercedes, and Richard
25 Morris, and Crystan Wilson; her great-granddaughter, Makayla
26 Harden; her step-grandchildren, Precious and Nathan Rice; her
27 sisters, Dr. Stephanie Carpenter, Tanya Rodgers, Pamela D.
28 Bady, and Sheila Williams; her brother, Kenneth Walls; her
29 half-sisters, Latisha Perry and Lisa (Anthony) Pearson; her
30 aunts, Mother Elward L. May and Mrs. Jessie (George) Galloway;
31 her great-aunt and great-uncle, Mr. Eddie (Rose Evelyn)
32 Langford; her great-aunts, Mrs. Louise Slack, Mrs. Mildred
33 Langford, and Mrs. Susie Langford; and her special childhood

1 friend, Mrs. Earnestine Fowler; therefore, be it

2 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL
3 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
4 Dr. LaRona Jane Walls Morris, and we extend our deepest
5 sympathy to her family, friends, and all who knew and loved
6 her; and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
8 presented to her family as an expression of our sincerest
9 condolences for their loss.