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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 Willie Thomas of Peoria Heights, who passed away on July 10, 2007; and

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WHEREAS, Willie Thomas was born on June 10, 1913, in Jackson, Mississippi; her parents were Albert and Emma (Cox) Brady; she grew up and lived most of her life in Jackson with her older brothers, Julius and Louis Brady; she attended County Line Baptist Church School and later attended Lenior High School in Jackson, Mississippi; she later married and had three children, George Edward Ward, Eugene Powell Jr., and May Emma Samples; and

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WHEREAS, Willie Thomas moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1944; in 1969, she moved to Kewanee, where she owned a soul food restaurant; she later moved to Peoria and purchased a 10 acre farm, where she raised and sold livestock; and

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WHEREAS, Willie Thomas was a devoted and loyal Christian throughout her life; she was a member of Peoria Friendship Baptist Church, where she also served as a Mother of the church; and

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WHEREAS, Willie Thomas was known throughout the Peoria

1 Heights neighborhood as "Miss Earlene"; she was best known for  
2 her volunteer work at Carver Center, where she spent hours  
3 encouraging others and spreading laughter; she made it a point  
4 to drive to the center and visit her friends to bring a smile  
5 to their faces; the young and old always loved her visits and  
6 witty sense of humor; and

7 WHEREAS, Willie Thomas was preceded in death by her  
8 siblings, Julius and Louis Brady; and her daughter; and

9 WHEREAS, Willie Thomas is survived by her sons, George  
10 Edward Ward Sr. and Eugene Powell Jr.; her seventeen  
11 grandchildren; her forty-seven great-grandchildren; her seven  
12 great-great-grandchildren; and a host of cousins and nephews;  
13 therefore, be it

14 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL  
15 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn, along with  
16 her family and friends, the passing of Willie Thomas; and be it  
17 further

18 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
19 presented to the family of Willie Thomas as an expression of  
20 our sympathy.