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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 General Wayne Downing of Peoria Heights, who passed away on July 18, 2007; and

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WHEREAS, Wayne Downing was born in Peoria on May 10, 1940; his parents were Eileen M. Weiland and F. Wayne "Bud" Downing; and

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WHEREAS, Wayne Downing graduated from St. Cecilia School in 1954; his father was a World War II veteran who was killed in action in Germany in 1945; after graduating from Spalding High School in Peoria, he was granted a competitive appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point, where he graduated in June 1962 with a Bachelor's of Science degree; he was commissioned a second lieutenant following the commencement speech delivered by President John F. Kennedy; he later earned a Master's of Business Administration degree from Tulane University; and

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WHEREAS, Wayne Downing began his 34-year career in the U.S. Army by leading soldiers in his first assignment as a platoon leader in Company B, 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade in Okinawa; he then served two years with the famous 173rd in Vietnam from 1964 to 1966; he served a third

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1 year in Vietnam with the 25th Infantry Division before moving  
2 on to many assignments in infantry, armor, special operations,  
3 and joint units; he later served in the 1st Ranger Battalion in  
4 1975 and 1976 and commanded the 2nd Ranger Battalion from 1977  
5 to 1979; and

6 WHEREAS, In 1984, Wayne Downing was chosen to form and lead  
7 the 75th Ranger Regiment; under his command, the regiment grew  
8 to its highest level in 40 years by having activated an  
9 additional Ranger battalion and a regimental headquarters; the  
10 two previously existing Ranger battalions, the 2nd and 75th,  
11 and the new addition were integrated into a cohesive unit that  
12 to this day continues to work by its creed, "Rangers Lead the  
13 Way"; he was widely recognized as the father of the modern  
14 Rangers, demonstrating the organizational skill and technical  
15 refinements during this time that would have far-reaching  
16 effects on the future successes of his Rangers and of United  
17 States Special Operations Forces in general; and

18 WHEREAS, Wayne Downing was appointed as the commanding  
19 general of the Joint Special Operations command based at Fort  
20 Bragg, North Carolina, in November 1989; in December 1989, he  
21 commanded the joint Special Operations Forces in Panama during  
22 Operation Just Cause; during Operation Desert Storm, he  
23 commanded a joint task force of 1,200 Special Operations Forces  
24 who conducted highly effective attacks in Iraq, drastically

1 reducing the enemy's overall ballistic missile threat; in  
2 August 1991, he took command of the United States Army Special  
3 Operations Command at Fort Bragg, a purview which included the  
4 nation's Ranger, Civil Affairs, Army Special Operations  
5 Aviation, Psychological Operations, and Special Operations  
6 forces; and

7 WHEREAS, In 1993, Wayne Downing was appointed to the rank  
8 of four-star general and assigned as commander-in-chief of the  
9 United States Special Operations Command; in this final active  
10 duty command, he led the nation's 46,000 Special Operations  
11 soldiers, sailors, and airmen; highly decorated by his nation  
12 and many of its allies, he retired from active duty in 1996;  
13 and

14 WHEREAS, Following his retirement, Wayne Downing was  
15 appointed by the President to lead a 40-person task force to  
16 investigate the 1996 terrorist attack on the U.S. base at  
17 Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia; continuing his lifetime of  
18 public service, he then served as a member of the National  
19 Commission on Terrorism, known as the Bremer Commission, from  
20 1999 to 2000, where he assisted in the examination of the  
21 terrorist threat to the United States and found a need for an  
22 aggressive strategy on combating terrorism; in 2001, General  
23 Downing served the White House as National Director and Deputy  
24 National Security Advisor for Combating Terrorism, where he was

1 responsible for the close coordination between military,  
2 diplomatic, intelligence, law enforcement, and financial  
3 operations of our nation's war on terror and was responsible  
4 for developing and executing a strategy that integrated all  
5 elements of national power; and

6 WHEREAS, Wayne Downing was chairman and founder of the  
7 Combating Terrorism Center at the United States Military  
8 Academy at West Point, a capacity in which he conducted the  
9 Terrorism Studies Seminar; as the Distinguished Chair, he  
10 directed the center's research activities in combating  
11 terrorism; in May 2006, the United States Military Academy  
12 Association of Graduates honored General Downing with its  
13 Distinguished Graduate Award in recognition of his lifetime of  
14 service to the United States of America as a combat leader,  
15 educator, global strategist and national security expert; and

16 WHEREAS, Wayne Downing served on several boards in the  
17 private sector; he was also a visiting faculty member at the  
18 University of Michigan Business School, a role in which he  
19 conducted seminars on leadership and transformation  
20 management; and

21 WHEREAS, Wayne Downing was the recipient of many awards and  
22 decorations for his meritorious service, including the Defense  
23 Distinguished Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, the

1 Distinguished Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Silver  
2 Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Defense Superior Service Medal,  
3 the Legion of Merit with three Oak Leaf Clusters, the Soldiers  
4 Medal, the Bronze Star with V Device for Valor and five Oak  
5 Leaf Clusters, the Purple Heart, the Air Medal with V Device  
6 and 35 Oak Leaf Clusters, and the Army Commendation Medal with  
7 V Device and three Oak Leaf Clusters; General Downing earned  
8 the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Military Free Fall  
9 Jumpmaster Badge, the Master Parachute Badge, the Ranger Tab,  
10 and the Pathfinder Badge; he was also a commander in the French  
11 Legion of Honor; and

12 WHEREAS, Wayne Downing was preceded in death by his father;  
13 and his sister, Beth (Terry) Hartnett; and

14 WHEREAS, Wayne Downing is survived by his mother, Eileen  
15 Downing; his wife, Kathryn Bickerman Downing; his sister,  
16 Marlianne (J. Michael) Fortune; his daughters, Elizabeth  
17 Downing Revell and Laura Downing; Elizabeth's husband, James  
18 Revell, and their daughter, Madeline; and his stepsons and  
19 daughters, Daniel and Leanne Immesoete and their children, John  
20 Phillip (Jack) Immesoete and Molly Anne; Barry and Laurie Pearl  
21 Cain and their children, Charles Patrick, Mary Kathryn, and  
22 John Casey Cain; Kathryn Cain-Immesoete; Dr. Phillip A.  
23 Immesoete II; Drew Baron Immesoete, and Morgan Christopher  
24 Immesoete; and

1           WHEREAS, Wayne Downing leaves behind a personal legacy as a  
2 military leader, father, and role model, worthy of the respect  
3 and admiration of the citizens of the State of Illinois and our  
4 nation; therefore, be it

5           RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL  
6 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn, along with  
7 his family and friends, the passing of General Wayne Downing;  
8 and be it further

9           RESOLVED, That we honor the memory of General Wayne Downing  
10 and his willingness to serve our country with bravery and  
11 distinction; and be it further

12           RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
13 presented to the family of General Wayne Downing as an  
14 expression of our sympathy.