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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 Robert E. Wooten, Sr. of Chicago, who passed away on March 27, 2008; and

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WHEREAS, Robert E. Wooten, Sr. was born on February 17, 1930; he was the son of Flora and John Henry Wooten; he was a lifelong resident of Chicago; and

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WHEREAS, In 1945, while attending Morgan Park High School, Robert E. Wooten, Sr. organized a gospel choral group, the Morgan Park Crusaders; after graduation, he was stricken by a serious illness and was hospitalized for a year; upon recovering from his illness, he devoted his life and musical talent to serving his faith; and

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WHEREAS, Robert E. Wooten, Sr. devoted much of his life to his great faith; in July of 1949, he founded the Wooten Choral Ensemble, based at Beth Eden Baptist Church; today, the Wooten Choral Ensemble boasts more than fifty members and has traveled extensively to perform and preach the gospel, expressing a spiritual message through anthems, hymns, black spirituals, and gospel sounds; the Ensemble has recorded several albums and appeared on many local radio and television programs; he retired as the Minister of Music of Beth Eden Baptist Church

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1 after 60 years of service to the congregation; he also served  
2 as Director of Music for the Progressive National Baptist  
3 Convention and as a clinician throughout the nation; and

4 WHEREAS, Robert E. Wooten, Sr. received his bachelor's  
5 degree in music education from the Chicago Musical Conservatory  
6 in 1956 and his master's degree from Roosevelt University in  
7 1968; and

8 WHEREAS, Robert E. Wooten, Sr. received many awards and  
9 recognitions for his contributions to gospel music; he was  
10 given an honorary doctorate from Virginia Seminary College in  
11 1983; he was recognized at the Chicago Gospel Festival in 1994  
12 for his contributions to religious music; in 2004, he was  
13 listed by The History Makers for outstanding contributions in  
14 Music; in 2005, he was honored by NASPAAM (National Association  
15 for the Study and Performance of African-American Music) for  
16 his outstanding achievements in African-American music; and

17 WHEREAS, Robert E. Wooten, Sr. also enjoyed a distinguished  
18 career as an educator; during his tenure at Parker High School  
19 in Chicago, he led the school's choir to city-wide fame and  
20 rose to the rank of assistant principal before becoming a  
21 district administrator; he worked as a district administrator  
22 with the Chicago Board of Education until his retirement in  
23 1994; and

1           WHEREAS, Robert E. Wooten, Sr. and his wife, Frances, were  
2 married since 1956; together, they had three children;  
3 therefore, be it

4           RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL  
5 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn, along with  
6 his family and friends, the passing of Robert E. Wooten, Sr.;  
7 and be it further

8           RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
9 presented to the family of Robert E. Wooten, Sr. as an  
10 expression of our sympathy.