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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 Donald Wilson of Downers Grove, who passed away on April 10, 2008; and

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WHEREAS, The Wilson family came from Sweden to Illinois when Donald's Uncle August (a wagon maker) was asked to participate as a tradesman at the Swedish Pavilion in the Columbian Exposition (World's Fair) in Chicago in 1893; after the Exposition ended, he settled in Geneva with a group of other Swedes, and he wrote Donald's father (Oscar) in Sweden and encouraged him to join August in America; and

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WHEREAS, Oscar joined his brother in Geneva in 1899 and they soon started a building business, known as Wilson Brothers, which was responsible for designing and building a significant number of homes in Geneva and Batavia and also many buildings still standing on Main Street in Geneva; two of their first residential houses (the Hoyt house in Geneva and the Gridley-Snow house in Batavia) were designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, and they also worked on other Wright projects including the Unity Temple in Oak Park and the Avery Coonley house in Riverside; and

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WHEREAS, Donald Wilson was the youngest of six children;

1 his siblings included, Marion, Kenneth, Norman, George, and  
2 Leonard; they were born to Oscar and Frida Wilson (Frida also  
3 being a Swedish immigrant); Donald was born in 1919, he  
4 attended Geneva public schools, and was the quarterback on the  
5 Geneva High School football team; and

6 WHEREAS, Donald and his wife began dating while they were  
7 both students at Geneva High School; after high school, Donald  
8 worked for two years before starting at Cornell College in Mt.  
9 Vernon, Iowa, but his college experience was interrupted when  
10 World War II broke out in 1941; and

11 WHEREAS, He enlisted in the United States Navy and became a  
12 Pilot and Section Leader in Bombing Squadron Three in the USS  
13 Yorktown; he piloted an SBD Dauntless Divebomber on numerous  
14 carrier-based missions over the Philippines, Formosa, French  
15 Indo-China, Chichi Jim, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa, and he  
16 participated in the first Navy carrier-based plane strikes  
17 against Tokyo; for his service, he was awarded the Navy Air  
18 Medal and four Navy Gold Stars; he sent an engagement ring to  
19 his future wife, Lucille Stokes, by mail while he was aboard an  
20 aircraft carrier, and they were married on August 30, 1943  
21 while he was on leave; and

22 WHEREAS, After the war, he graduated from Cornell College  
23 and left business school in 1947 to enter the management

1 training program at Bell Telephone, where he worked for  
2 approximately 35 years; Bell Telephone's practice was to move  
3 their management people among different offices, so he worked  
4 in Chicago, Elgin, Rockford, Chicago (again), Joliet, and then  
5 Chicago one more time during his career; in Joliet, he was  
6 active in the United Way and served as President of the West  
7 Side Kiwanis Club of Joliet; he also sang as a baritone in two  
8 barbershop quartets that competed in state-wide competitions;  
9 and

10 WHEREAS, After retiring in 1981, he participated as a  
11 volunteer in several community activities, including teaching  
12 English as a second language to immigrants from over 30  
13 countries in the Downers Grove area; he was also an active  
14 member of the First United Methodist Church in Downers Grove;  
15 and

16 WHEREAS, Donald Wilson is survived by his wife of over 64  
17 years, Lucille; his two daughters, Louise Wilson and Mary  
18 Ambrose; his son, John Wilson; and his five grandchildren;  
19 therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL  
21 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn, along with  
22 his family and friends, the passing of Donald Wilson; and be it  
23 further

1           RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
2 presented to the family of Donald Wilson as a symbol of our  
3 sincere sympathy.