



HR0121

LRB097 10845 KXB 51339 r

1

HOUSE RESOLUTION

2           WHEREAS, State Representative Monique D. Davis and the  
3 members of the Illinois House of Representatives are saddened  
4 to learn of the death of Benjamin C. Duster III of Chicago, who  
5 passed away on February 11, 2011; and

6           WHEREAS, He was the grandson of Ida B. Wells, legendary  
7 anti-lynching crusader; she was born a slave and later became a  
8 journalist, suffragist, and a founder of the NAACP; and

9           WHEREAS, He was born in Bronzeville and grew up during the  
10 Depression; he was the oldest of five children born to Alfreda  
11 and Benjamin Duster; he was influenced by his mother, who  
12 graduated from the University of Chicago and was sought out by  
13 many for her guidance; and

14           WHEREAS, He attended Wendall Phillips High School and  
15 graduated as class valedictorian at the age of 16; he studied  
16 electrical engineering at the University of Illinois at  
17 Urbana-Champaign and joined Alpha Phi Alpha; after the passing  
18 of his father, he returned home to help his mother, working as  
19 a bricklayer and running an auto garage and construction firm,  
20 all while attending night classes at DePaul University to  
21 become a lawyer; and

1           WHEREAS, He served in the United States Army as an ordnance  
2 technician in the early 1950s; he ran against political  
3 powerhouse "Big Bill" Dawson for the 1st District congressional  
4 seat in 1962, losing the election but taking on the political  
5 "Machine" of Chicago; and

6           WHEREAS, He earned his MBA from the University of Chicago  
7 in 1967 and worked at the investment firm of G.H. Walker &  
8 Company; his volunteer work with education in the late 1960s  
9 and early 1970s helped bring about later school reform; and

10           WHEREAS, He opened his own law firm and worked there for 30  
11 years, specializing in residential and commercial real estate;  
12 he was president of Seaway Communications for a brief time; he  
13 was named chair of the Illinois Commission on Human Rights by  
14 former Illinois Governor Richard Ogilvie, serving from 1971 to  
15 1973; and

16           WHEREAS, He loved barbecuing ribs and shrimp on a large  
17 grill he fashioned himself; he loved deviled eggs, theater,  
18 especially works by August Wilson, and "Les Miserables"; and

19           WHEREAS, Benjamin C. Duster III is survived by his wife,  
20 Murrell; his son, Benjamin Duster IV; his brothers, Donald and  
21 Troy; his daughters, Alice Pennamon and Muriel DeVore; his  
22 sister, Alfreda Duster Ferrell; and his 11 grandchildren;

1 therefore, be it

2 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
3 NINETY-SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
4 we mourn, along with his family and friends, the passing of  
5 Benjamin C. Duster III; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
7 presented to the family of Benjamin C. Duster III as a symbol  
8 of our sincere sympathy.