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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives are saddened to learn of the death of Don
4 Cornelius, who passed away on February 1, 2012; and

5 WHEREAS, Don Cornelius was born on September 27, 1936, in
6 Chicago, and was raised in the Bronzeville neighborhood; after
7 graduating from DuSable High School in 1954, he joined the
8 United States Marine Corps, where he served for 18 months in
9 Korea; and

10 WHEREAS, After his stint in the military, Don Cornelius
11 worked at various jobs, including selling tires, automobiles,
12 and insurance, and as an officer with the Chicago Police
13 Department; he also married his high school sweetheart, Delores
14 Harrison, and had 2 sons, Anthony and Raymond; in 1966, he quit
15 his day job to take a 3-month broadcasting course; that same
16 year, he landed a job as an announcer, news reporter, and disc
17 jockey on Chicago radio station WVON; in 1967, he joined
18 Chicago television station WCIU-TV and hosted a news program
19 called "A Black's View of the News"; and

20 WHEREAS, Don Cornelius was best known as the creator of the
21 nationally-syndicated dance/music franchise "Soul Train"; in
22 1970, he launched "Soul Train" on WCIU-TV as a daily local

1 show; the program entered national syndication and moved to Los
2 Angeles the following year; he served as the host of the
3 popular program from 1971 to 1993; following his departure from
4 the show, he continued his work as a producer until 2006; and

5 WHEREAS, Through his origins as a journalist inspired by
6 the civil rights movement, Don Cornelius recognized that, in
7 the late 1960s, there was no television venue in the United
8 States for soul music; as such he used the show to introduce
9 many African-American musicians to a larger audience through
10 their appearances on "Soul Train"; as writer, producer, and
11 host of "Soul Train", he was instrumental in offering wider
12 exposure to such musicians as James Brown, Aretha Franklin, and
13 Michael Jackson, as well as creating opportunities for talented
14 dancers that would inspire subsequent television dance
15 programs; he was also lauded for his show's uplifting community
16 messages and social awareness; and

17 WHEREAS, In addition to his work on "Soul Train", Don
18 Cornelius had a small number of film roles, most notably as
19 record producer Moe Fuzz in 1988's "Tapeheads"; therefore, be
20 it

21 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
22 NINETY-SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
23 we mourn, along with his family and friends, the passing of Don

1 Cornelius; and be it further

2 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
3 presented to the family of Don Cornelius as an expression of
4 our sympathy.