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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 William C. "Bill" Nichols of Decatur, who passed away on April 21, 2012; and

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WHEREAS, He was born October 2, 1927 in Baxter Springs, Kansas, the son of Claude and Beulah (Goff) Nichols; he felt God's call to ministry when he was a sophomore in high school and was ordained on August 1, 1948; and

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WHEREAS, He received his education from Culver Stockton, Phillips University Seminary, and the University of Chicago; he also received honorary degrees from Phillips University, Eureka College, Bethany College, and Chapman University; he gave named lectureships at several universities and seminaries; he was an Honorary Life Member of Phi Kappa Phi from Millikin University; he was elected to membership in the Theological Society for Faith and Reason and was listed in "Who's Who in America"; and

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WHEREAS, During his ministry he served the First Christian Church in Poteau, Oklahoma, the First Christian Church in Augusta, Kansas, and Central Christian Church in Kansas City, Kansas; in 1973, he moved to Decatur, where he served as Senior Minister at Central Christian Church for 19 years; in 1991, he

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1 was elected to serve a term as General Minister and President  
2 of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United  
3 States and Canada; and

4 WHEREAS, Following his term as head of the denomination, he  
5 was called to serve as Senior Minister of National City  
6 Christian Church in Washington, D.C. for a 2-year term; and

7 WHEREAS, He traveled extensively and was frequently called  
8 upon to represent the church in religious gatherings around the  
9 world; he preached and lectured in Canada, Nova Scotia, China,  
10 Cuba, Puerto Rico, several European nations, and Australia,  
11 where he preached for a month all over the country; he was  
12 elected Pastoral Counselor for the National Organization of  
13 Disciple Men at the opening night of "Session 76"; and

14 WHEREAS, He served on boards which he often chaired for  
15 many church organizations: the Division of Global Missions,  
16 Homeland Ministries, the Council on Christian Unity, Church  
17 Extension, Higher Education, the National Benevolent  
18 Association, the Bilateral Council of American and Puerto Rican  
19 Churches, Colorado Christian Home, Kansas Christian Home, the  
20 Illinois Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches,  
21 Kansas Churches, and the Disciples Historical Society; and

22 WHEREAS, He was a founding board member of Decatur

1 Advantage and chaired the Quality of Life Task Force for 8  
2 years; in this role, he became the Founding Father of the  
3 Decatur Celebration; every Sunday for 18 years, he broadcast a  
4 radio ministry on WSOY called "Good News from Central"; he  
5 served as board member or officer of many community boards as  
6 well, such as the Downtown Kiwanis Club of Kansas City, the  
7 Salvation Army, the Red Cross, St. Mary's Hospital, the Macon  
8 County Mental Health Association, and the Decatur Area Arts  
9 Council; and

10 WHEREAS, He was named a Paul Harris Fellow by Rotary  
11 International; with his friend, Howard Brown, he co-founded the  
12 ROMEO Men's Club; he was blessed with a warm personal  
13 relationship with Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa,  
14 Bishop Shen of China, and other world leaders; and

15 WHEREAS, He was a prolific writer, having published many  
16 articles, journals, and curricular materials; his interest in  
17 writing began in college where he was awarded the Vachel  
18 Lindsay Poetry Award; he authored 7 books; his last published  
19 work was an intriguing mystery, "If Gold Shall Rust"; and

20 WHEREAS, He enjoyed music and played the piano beautifully;  
21 he composed 2 sacred anthems, one sacred solo, and one jazz  
22 "torch" song; and

1           WHEREAS, He maintained that his smartest decision was to  
2 marry Claudine Shewmake in Baxter Springs, Kansas in 1945; and

3           WHEREAS, He was preceded in death by his parents; and his  
4 brother, Robert; and

5           WHEREAS, William Nichols is survived by his wife, Claudine;  
6 his son, David Nichols; his daughter Claudia Quigg; his  
7 daughter-in-law, Carol Nichols; his son-in-law Leo Quigg; his  
8 grandchildren, Maggie Nichols, Jesse Nichols (Jenny), Betsy  
9 Osman (Aaron), Michala Lynn (Adam), Sally McLemore (Nick), Noah  
10 Nichols, and Benjamin Quigg; and his great-grandchildren,  
11 Christian Bettis, Isabella Wagener, Charles Wagener, Mason  
12 Lynn, Reef Nichols, Lauren McLemore, Jane Osman, and Joslin  
13 McLemore; therefore, be it

14           RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-SEVENTH GENERAL  
15 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn, along with  
16 his family and friends, the passing of William Nichols; and be  
17 it further

18           RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
19 presented to the family of William Nichols as a symbol of our  
20 sincere sympathy.