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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 Joan Johnson-Blackwell of Lewistown, who passed away on April 2, 2012; and

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WHEREAS, She was born January 3, 1944, to John Sprague Stout and Nancy Jane Halstead Stout in Springfield; at a young age, she became attracted to poetry by Edgar Guest and the Edgar Lee Masters poem "Anne Rutledge"; and

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WHEREAS, She graduated from Glenwood High School in Chatham and from Western Illinois University in Macomb; she married Randle Ray Johnson on November 7, 1964, in Chatham; he passed away on June 22, 1986; she then married Robert B. Blackwell on September 1, 1989, in Lewistown; and

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WHEREAS, She taught gifted classes at Lewistown McNally School and she taught English, speech, and drama at Lewistown Community High School; and

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WHEREAS, She devoted her life to culture and tourism in Fulton County; she helped to organize the Fulton County Tourism Council and served 8 years as its secretary and then president; she was one of the driving forces behind the Spoon River Drive, helping organize and promote its activities; and

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1 WHEREAS, She enjoyed being a producer and reader for local
2 performances of Masters poetry at Oak Hill Cemetery on Masters
3 Day for 21 years and the Spoon River Valley Scenic Drive for
4 over 20 years; she wrote poetry and free-lance feature articles
5 especially on history, travel, collectibles, and Spoon River
6 Scenic Drive folks and events; she was a publicist for Spoon
7 River Valley Scenic Drive Associates for nearly 28 years; and

8 WHEREAS, She enjoyed writing and taking photos for the
9 Spoon River Valley Scenic Drive program books, cookbooks, and
10 publicity; she served several terms as a director for the
11 Fulton County Arts Council and volunteered at the Fulton-Mason
12 Crisis Center and the Lewistown Food Pantry; and

13 WHEREAS, She was a member of the Lewistown United Methodist
14 Church, where she served as a Sunday School teacher, United
15 Methodist lay speaker, historian, Ruth Circle member, and
16 chairperson for the church's 175th anniversary; she also
17 enjoyed reading, sewing, antiques, and traveling; and

18 WHEREAS, She worked as a real estate broker/appraiser since
19 1975; she served as an officer of the Fulton County Board of
20 Realtors and MLS and as a real estate instructor; she and her
21 first husband formed Farm & Home Realty of Lewistown in 1975
22 and were members of the Lewistown Chamber of Commerce; she used

1 her appraisal experience and medical training as an Illinois
2 disability adjudicator in Springfield; and

3 WHEREAS, She was a past member of the Spoon River
4 Professional Women and the Lewistown Eastern Star; she helped
5 to organize the Spoon River Writer's Guild in 1970s; in
6 retirement, she added a new circle of poet-friends in the
7 Peoria Poetry Club and served as its president since 2006; and

8 WHEREAS, Joan Johnson-Blackwell is survived by her
9 husband, Robert; her sisters, Phyllis Stout, Melissa Stout, and
10 Janifer Day; her daughter, Jo Ellen Johnson; her son, Andrewe
11 William (Stephanie) Johnson; her stepsons, Steve (Pam)
12 Blackwell and Barry (Terresa) Blackwell; her grandchildren,
13 Riley and Morgan Johnson; her grandcats, Big Ed, Shadow,
14 Moonlight, and Culver; her step-grandchildren, Cara and
15 Christopher Blackwell, Megan Blackwell, and Rob Blackwell; and
16 several nieces and nephews; therefore, be it

17 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-SEVENTH GENERAL
18 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn, along with
19 her family and friends, the passing of Joan-Johnson-Blackwell;
20 we celebrate her love of life and her boundless energy and
21 enthusiasm; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be

1 presented to the family of Joan Johnson-Blackwell as a symbol
2 of our sincere sympathy.