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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 Elroy Edward "Buck" Hilbert of Union, who passed away on August 3, 2016; and

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WHEREAS, Elroy Hilbert was born on November 16, 1924 in Chicago; his parents were Elroy Lawrence and Florence Hilbert; he married Elizabeth "Betty" A. Briegel in 1951; she passed away in 1960; he married Dorothy E. Steffenhagen in 1961; and

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WHEREAS, Elroy Hilbert was bitten by the aviation "bug" early in his life; at the age of 12, he became a line boy at Elmhurst Airport; he made his first solo flight in 1941 at Wood Dale Airport; after graduating from Lane Tech High School, he joined the United States Army Air Corps in 1942 and trained as an aircraft maintenance specialist; in 1944, he graduated as a flight officer and was sent to B-17 training; he was discharged in 1946, but was recalled to active duty in 1950 and flew as an Army Aviator Liaison Pilot in the Korean War; and

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WHEREAS, Elroy Hilbert worked in various jobs, including crop spraying, flight instruction, Wisconsin Bell, Wisconsin Power and Light, and a rural mail carrier before being hired to fly for United Airlines in 1952, where he worked for the next 32 years flying DC-3s, Convairs, Viscounts, DC-6s, DC-7s,

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1 Boeing 707s, Boeing 727s, and finishing his career flying
2 DC-8s; and

3 WHEREAS, In 1971, Elroy Hilbert and his wife moved to Union
4 and turned an old hog farm into an aviator haven known as
5 "Hilbert's Funny Farm"; although he earned his living as a
6 commercial pilot, his love for history and the preservation of
7 early flying machines led him to seek out, restore, and fly
8 numerous antique and classic aircraft; in 1976, he participated
9 in the restoration of a Swallow biplane and a subsequent public
10 relations tour in celebration of United Airlines 50th
11 anniversary, flying the original airmail route of the plane all
12 over the United States; and

13 WHEREAS, As a promoter of general aviation, Elroy Hilbert
14 was a member of numerous associations, chapters, and clubs; he
15 was a founding member of the Experimental Aircraft Association
16 (EAA) and the first president of EAA's Antique and Classic
17 Division; he and his wife volunteered annually for the EAA
18 Convention (AirVenture) in Oshkosh, Wisconsin and for the Sun
19 'n Fun Fly-In in Lakeland, Florida; and

20 WHEREAS, Elroy Hilbert was a Certified Flight Instructor
21 and an airframe and power plant mechanic; he authored many
22 articles for EAA publications, including a monthly column
23 called "Pass it to Buck" for Vintage magazine, and was

1 frequently asked to speak at flying clubs events and other
2 aviation organizations; and

3 WHEREAS, Elroy Hilbert was recognized for his many
4 contributions to the aviation world throughout his life and
5 holds a place in both the Illinois Aviation and the EAA Hall of
6 Fame; he was also honored as an Elder Statesman for the
7 National Aeronautical Association; and

8 WHEREAS, Elroy Hilbert was a regular contributor to the
9 McHenry County Historical Society, the Illinois Railway
10 Museum, and other organizations that work to preserve and share
11 local history; and

12 WHEREAS, Elroy Hilbert was preceded in death by his first
13 wife, Elizabeth; his second wife, Dorothy; his parents; and his
14 siblings, Dianne Buckles and Frank Hilbert; and

15 WHEREAS, Elroy Hilbert is survived by his children, Bob
16 (Diane), Christine, Alice (Tom) Taylor, Elroy E. (Laurie), Lee
17 (Corinn), and Leslie; his grandchildren, Heidi, Robert,
18 Matthew, Sierra, Tim, Luke, Whitman, and Benjamin; his
19 great-grandchildren, Kyle and Nicholas; many cousins, nieces,
20 and nephews; his cat; and many friends and honorary children;
21 therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL
2 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we, along with his
3 family and friends, mourn the passing of Elroy Edward "Buck"
4 Hilbert; and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
6 presented to the family of Elroy Hilbert as an expression of
7 our sympathy.