

1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives are pleased to recognize milestone events in
4 the lives of the citizens of the State of Illinois; and

5 WHEREAS, It has come to our attention that Valentino
6 DeCastris, known professionally as Val Eddy, received the
7 2001 Rockford Area Music Industry's (RAMIs) highest award,
8 "The Lifetime Achievement Award" on April 19, 2001 at
9 Rockford's Metro Centre to commemorate his long and
10 prestigious musical career; and

11 WHEREAS, Val Eddy was born in 1926 to Orlando and Amalia
12 Ludovici DeCastris in the Italian-American community of south
13 Rockford, Illinois; in the early 1900s, his parents
14 immigrated to Rockford, Illinois from Ferentino, Italy, an
15 ancient hill town near Rome; his father, Orlando DeCastris
16 was the Secretary of the Winnebago County Democratic Central
17 Committee in the 1930s and 1940s and was a leader in
18 Rockford's Italian-American community; Orlando DeCastris
19 hosted Illinois Governor Horner and U.S. Senator Hershey at
20 his home and was a Precinct Captain in Rockford's 5th Ward;
21 Val Eddy married the late Patricia Macaluso, a ballet and
22 modern dance instructor with the Arthur Murray Studios, and
23 they toured the country until their daughter Valeri began
24 elementary school; Valeri served as a research associate for
25 the Illinois Citizens Assembly; her career as an
26 environmental scientist with the State of Illinois and
27 private sector, and adjunct professor at Illinois colleges
28 has included civic work with numerous organizations,
29 including twelve years on the Illinois Citizens Utility
30 Board; and

31 WHEREAS, Beginning in the 1930s, nailing together a
32 broken mandolin, Val Eddy began a journey, which evolved into

1 a full-time career in music; the south Rockford Italian
2 community of his youth was filled with the sounds of
3 musicians, brass bands, and serenades; children and their
4 parents danced together in the many Italian social clubs, in
5 the streets and in the tidy yards, with the steady percussion
6 of bocce balls and lively conversation keeping the cadence;
7 mandolin music could be heard daily from the porch of his
8 neighbor, mandolin-player Gabriel Giorgi, father of the late
9 E.J. "Zeke" Giorgi, who served in the Illinois House of
10 Representatives for 28 years from the 67th District in
11 Rockford, Illinois; sitting at the elder Giorgi's knee as a
12 child with rapt attention, he taught himself to play the
13 mandolin, bass and banjo; and

14 WHEREAS, Val Eddy has entertained audiences throughout
15 the world on the bass, mandolin, and banjo and performed with
16 some of the greatest artists in the jazz world; he has given
17 music lessons to scores of Illinois students and has played
18 with symphonies and pops orchestras throughout the State of
19 Illinois and the United States; he has been an artistic
20 ambassador for Illinois throughout the world, promoting jazz;
21 America's native musical form; mainly self-taught, he toured
22 with America's big bands and has performed on numerous
23 records and compact discs; and

24 WHEREAS, Val Eddy had a 40-year partnership with Rockford
25 native and pianist Homer Carlson and they performed at grand
26 hotels and nightclubs throughout The United States; Val Eddy
27 toured the country with the Del Courtney Orchestra for two
28 years and had long engagements at the Palace in San Francisco
29 and the Edgewater Beach Hotel and Aragon Ballroom in Chicago;
30 he played the Flamingo in Las Vegas with Jack Benny in the
31 1940s; serving his country in World War II, he performed in
32 the Army's Marching Band and was admitted to the Army's
33 prestigious Dance Band; during World War II, Val entertained

1 troops at USO clubs and the Ernie Pyle Theater in Tokyo,
2 Japan; and

3 WHEREAS, After World War II, the Val Eddy Duo had
4 extended engagements at the Town Lounge in Rockford, the
5 Riveria in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, the Times Lounge in
6 Rockford, the Lake Club in Springfield with Del Courtney and
7 Springfield's George Rank, the Pere Marquette Hotel in
8 Peoria, the Plantation in Moline, the Evergreen in Dundee and
9 Stan Hack's Place in Grand Detour, owned by the popular
10 Chicago Cub's third baseman; in the 1950s, the Val Eddy Trio,
11 featuring Chicago's Dave Lamond, starred in a popular live
12 television show, called "The Song Shop" on the Rockford
13 NBC-affiliate channel, WTVO Channel 39; and

14 WHEREAS, Val Eddy has had a long and illustrious career
15 as a full-time musician whose contributions to the arts in
16 Illinois spans six decades; currently, Val Eddy lives in
17 Rockford with his wife Marian and performs regularly with
18 area musicians in a variety of Venues; his partner Homer
19 Carlson retired from music in the mid-1990s; therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
21 NINETY-SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
22 we congratulate Val Eddy on receiving the Rockford Area Music
23 Industry's (RAMIs) highest award, "The Lifetime Achievement
24 Award" for 2001; and be it further

25 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
26 presented to Val Eddy as an expression of our esteem.