

1 SENATE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate wish to
3 express their sincere condolences to the family and friends
4 of Michael A. Bilandic, a former justice on the Illinois
5 Supreme and Appellate Courts; former Chicago alderman, and
6 former mayor of Chicago, who passed away on January 15, 2002;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, Born in Bridgeport in 1923, the son of immigrant
9 parents, Michael Bilandic learned Chicago politics early,
10 going to St. Jerome's Croatian School in the 11th Ward, an
11 area that produced Richard J. Daley and a host of mayors and
12 other politicians before him; and

13 WHEREAS, Michael Bilandic graduated from De La Salle High
14 School in 1940 and received his bachelor's degree from St.
15 Mary's College in Winona, Minnesota; he obtained a law degree
16 from De Paul University and served as a first lieutenant in
17 the Marine Corps during World War II in the Pacific theater;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, Mr. Bilandic was helpful and active in the
20 Democratic organization in the 11th Ward from the time in
21 1948 when he was asked to aid the party by then-ward
22 committeeman Richard J. Daley; however, his real political
23 career began in 1969 as alderman of the 11th Ward; and

24 WHEREAS, Alderman Bilandic was known as a legislative
25 trailblazer; he pioneered ordinances to ban lead paint and
26 phosphates from detergents that became an environmental model
27 for other major cities; in addition, he sponsored the
28 Lakefront Protection Ordinance, legislation to regulate
29 condominium conversions and a planned-development ordinance
30 that made sense of city planning; and

31 WHEREAS, Alderman Bilandic was knowledgeable in the field

1 of finance, and in 1974 he was chosen as council floor leader
2 and chairman of the powerful Finance Committee; and

3 WHEREAS, The quiet Michael Bilandic survived the
4 rough-and-tumble politics of the 11th Ward Democratic
5 organization to become the man chosen to succeed Mayor
6 Richard J. Daley after Mayor Daley's death in 1976; and

7 WHEREAS, Mayor Bilandic was considered a shoo-in for
8 renomination by the Democratic organization during the 1979
9 campaign until the city was hit by a huge snowstorm over the
10 New Year's holiday and a crippling storm two weeks later;
11 altogether, 35 inches of snow fell on the city in two weeks;
12 the slow removal of the mountains of snow by city workers was
13 blamed on Mayor Bilandic, leading to his defeat; and

14 WHEREAS, During his term in office, Mayor Bilandic
15 organized the first ChicagoFest and arranged city-insured,
16 low-interest mortgage loans for middle-income families; he
17 also lent his support to the Chicago Marathon and developed a
18 reputation as a runner; and

19 WHEREAS, Michael Bilandic took office as a bachelor, but
20 during his administration he married Heather Morgan; the
21 couple's son, Michael, was also born during his term in
22 office; and

23 WHEREAS, Justice Bilandic was elected to the Appellate
24 Court in 1984 and was elected to a 10-year term on the
25 Illinois Supreme Court in 1990; in 1993 he was selected by
26 his fellow justices to a three-year term as chief justice of
27 the Illinois Supreme Court; and

28 WHEREAS, During the 1990 campaign, other candidates
29 talked about the need for court reforms but Justice Bilandic
30 said he was more concerned about the law and making complex
31 legal issues understandable to everyone; he said he brought

1 his appellate court opinions home for his wife to read, if
2 she didn't understand them he threw them out and started
3 over; and

4 WHEREAS, Justice Bilandic leaves other legacies including
5 authoring high court opinions that guarantee patients the
6 right to sue their HMO's and giving parents the final
7 authority on whether grandparents get visitation in the State
8 of Illinois; therefore, be it

9 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-SECOND GENERAL
10 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn, along with
11 all who knew him, the death of former Chicago Mayor and
12 Illinois Supreme Court Justice Michael A. Bilandic; and be it
13 further

14 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
15 presented to the family of Justice Michael A. Bilandic with
16 our sincere condolences.