

1 SENATE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Many of those who survived the Holocaust never
3 wanted to talk about it; the memory was too painful, and even
4 decades later, they brushed away requests by family or
5 friends to recount what had happened to them in the Nazi
6 concentration camps; but there were others, like Lisa Derman,
7 who made it their life's calling to talk about their
8 experiences, so that generations to come would not forget;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, Lisa Derman died doing what she felt compelled
11 to do: tell the world about the Holocaust; she had to tell
12 the world, over and over, about how she and her family had
13 fled Poland when the Nazis invaded and how her sister and
14 mother eventually were massacred; but her story was also one
15 of hope, and she always spoke of the good people who had
16 helped her family escape; and

17 WHEREAS, Born in Poland, Lisa Derman was 14 when the
18 Nazis invaded her town; the family fled to Russian-occupied
19 territory before the Nazis took over there as well, forcing
20 them and 25,000 other Jews into a ghetto, allowing them to
21 bring only what they could carry; and

22 WHEREAS, Within months, the Nazis had killed thousands;
23 with their mother's help, Lisa and her sister escaped; as she
24 left, she glanced back, catching a last look at her mother;
25 later, the Nazis rounded up the Jews in the ghetto, among
26 them Lisa's mother and aunt, and massacred them in the woods;
27 and

28 WHEREAS, The sisters fled into the forest, where they
29 were discovered by a ranger who threatened them with an ax
30 and rifle; while forcing them to walk to the site of the
31 massacre, he tripped and the sisters escaped across an open
32 field; the girls returned to the ghetto to look for their

1 father and brother; the Nazis returned with guns, grenades
2 and guard dogs; Lisa's sister was shot to death, and with her
3 father and brother, Lisa watched the ghetto burn; and

4 WHEREAS, Mrs. Derman was rescued by the man who would
5 become her husband and later joined the Jewish resistance;
6 she and Aron Derman were married in Rome in 1947 and moved to
7 Chicago soon afterward; and

8 WHEREAS, Mrs. Derman's brother, who was later captured by
9 the Nazis, would be liberated from a concentration camp; her
10 father, who also survived, moved to Chicago in 1950 and died
11 a year later; and

12 WHEREAS, Soon after she came to Chicago in 1947, Mrs.
13 Derman began to speak out; she became president of the
14 Holocaust Memorial Foundation of Illinois, and pushed for a
15 State law, the first of its kind in the nation, that required
16 all school children be taught about the Holocaust; she helped
17 to raise money to create a new expanded Holocaust Memorial
18 Museum featuring survivors' stories, because she knew how
19 crucial those stories are; and

20 WHEREAS, There are Holocaust museums around the world
21 now, even at the former death camp Auschwitz, and they bear
22 witness to the slaughter of 6 million Jews; but horrific as
23 those exhibits can be, nothing can translate the enormity of
24 the Holocaust like the personal stories of the survivors; as
25 Joseph Stalin said, "A single death is a tragedy, a million
26 deaths is a statistic."; and

27 WHEREAS, Survivors like Lisa Derman were willing to share
28 their stories again and again, stirring their own grief so
29 that others could understand, on a personal and visceral
30 level, what had happened; and

31 WHEREAS, Lisa Derman is survived by her husband of 55

1 years, Aron Derman; her sons, Dr. Howard (wife, Barbara)
2 Derman, Dr. Gordon (wife, Dr. Carol Rosenberg) Derman, and
3 Dr. Daniel (wife, Tamara) Derman; her grandchildren,
4 Courtney, Lindsay, Ari, Benjamin, Yaei, Evan, Rachel, and
5 Gabe; and her brother, Robert (wife, Dalia) Ness; therefore,
6 be it

7 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-SECOND GENERAL
8 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn, along with
9 all who knew her, the death of Lisa Derman of Chicago; and be
10 it further

11 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
12 presented to the family of Lisa Derman with our sincere
13 condolences.