

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 2

Sponsored by Representative Michael J. Madigan and Senator Emil Jones, Jr.  
Adopted February 5, 2003

WHEREAS, The General Assembly takes pride in recognizing the accomplishments and contributions of Illinois officials and citizens; and

WHEREAS, In honor of the lasting legacy and many sacrifices that Judge Michael Anthony Bilandic made for the citizenry of the State of Illinois, the General Assembly would like to recognize him with the rare honor of naming a public building after this former official; and

WHEREAS, Michael Anthony Bilandic was one of the more influential and highly regarded public figures in Chicago, serving as Mayor of Chicago from 1976 to 1979 and later as Chief Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court; he was a man of commitment and a loyal Chicagoan; most importantly, he was devoted to his family, faithful to his church, and proud of his Croatian heritage; he died on January 16, 2002, at the age of 78; he is survived by his wife Heather, son Michael, brothers Steve and Nick, and sister Eleanor; and

WHEREAS, Born on February 13, 1923 to Croatian immigrants, Justice Bilandic grew up in the Bridgeport community where he attended St. Jerome Grammar School (class of '36) and De La Salle High School; after receiving a Bachelor of Science degree from St. Mary's College, he attended DePaul University College of Law where he earned a Juris Doctor degree; during WWII, he courageously served as a First Lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps; and

WHEREAS, Justice Bilandic's political career was rich and diverse, including service in all three branches of government over four decades; he began his long and distinguished public service career in 1969 when his neighbors elected him to represent them as Alderman of the 11th Ward in Chicago; as a member of the City Council, Alderman Bilandic pushed for the passage of many initiatives designed to protect the city's environment, including a ban on harmful lead-based paint and on phosphates in laundry detergent, and the passage of the Lakefront Protection Ordinance; considered an expert in government finance, he rose to serve as Chairman of the city's Finance Committee and later became floor leader; and

WHEREAS, In 1976, Bilandic was selected by his colleagues to serve as Mayor of Chicago; he was elected to that office in 1977, and held the post until 1979; as Mayor, he continued to be an innovator in the area of enhancing the city; he organized the first ChicagoFest, which was the precursor of many current festivals, and lent his support to the Chicago Marathon, which has become one of the premier running events in the world; he arranged the city-insured, low-interest mortgage loans for middle-income families in order to make the city more appealing to families; his wise and intelligent concern for the good of Chicago is evident in his accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, Bilandic returned to private law practice in 1979, and was widely respected for his keen intellect and exceptional insight into the intricacies of corporate law; a new career was begun with his election to the 1st District Appellate court and, in 1990, with his election to the highest judicial office, the Illinois Supreme Court, where he served as Chief Justice from 1994 through 1996; Justice Bilandic will always be remembered for his long years of unselfish public service, characterized by his decency, intelligence, and integrity; the legacy of Bilandic's dedication, devotion, and hard work serve as an example to all; a group of Chicago aldermen led the effort to rename the State of Illinois Building after him; and

WHEREAS, While much of Michael Bilandic's life was often consumed by his outstanding legal and political career, he possessed a great passion for his family and heritage; both of his parents came to the United States from Croatia in the early 1900s; his mother, "Minnie" (Lebedina), came from the village of Bobovisce on the island of Brac, Croatia; his father, Mate Bilandzic (later changed to Bilandic), emigrated from Dicmo, a village near Sinj, Croatia; he shared his family roots with his wife and son, and often visited Croatia; and

WHEREAS, Following a peaceful and dignified family funeral service, Justice Bilandic was quietly and humbly buried beside his parents at St. Mary's Cemetery; his wife described him as "a devoted family man (who) also loved Chicago and its people, was proud of his Croatian heritage, and grateful for the opportunities which this country provided to his family"; he was a gentle soul, a man of integrity, honor, and dignity, who brought gentleness and respect into the fields of government, law, politics, and all aspects of his life; and

WHEREAS, Justice Michael A. Bilandic made vital contributions of service and merit to the State of Illinois and to the State's citizens and deserves to have his achievements noted and remembered by current and future generations, as his memory is now honored by the General Assembly; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that we rename the State of Illinois Building at 160 North La Salle Street in Chicago in honor of Michael Bilandic; and in implementing this honor, we designate that State building as the Michael Bilandic Building; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this preamble and resolution be presented to the Director of Central Management Services.