

**2013 -- H 6106**

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**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**

**IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2013**

**H O U S E R E S O L U T I O N**

**EXPRESSING SINCERE CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF  
HELEN CLAIRE DESMARAIS**

Introduced By: Representatives Costa, and Craven

Date Introduced: May 09, 2013

Referred To: House read and passed

1           WHEREAS, It is with great sadness that this House has learned of the passing of Helen  
2 Claire Desmarais, beloved wife for more than fifty years of the late Army Colonel Arthur Joseph  
3 Desmarais and the devoted mother of five children, Karen Connery and her husband, David,  
4 Debra Nielsen and her husband, Rolf, Michael Desmarais and his wife, Diane, Coreen Gardiner  
5 and her husband, Fenwick, and Colette Massa and her husband, Chris; and

6           WHEREAS, Born and raised in Fall River, Mrs. Desmarais was the daughter of the late  
7 Nora and Alfred McNally and the sister of Constance Burton, Alfred McNally, Jr., and the late  
8 Dorothea Mello. As a young girl, she began cultivating culinary skills that would later delight her  
9 family and friends, and also loved the ocean and spending her summers in Newport and, later, in  
10 Westport Harbor; and

11           WHEREAS, Mrs. Desmarais attended St. Patrick's parish school and was a graduate of  
12 the Dominican Academy. Upon graduation, she worked in the Payroll Department for the Fall  
13 River Knitting Mill and later, during World War II, she was employed at the United States Post  
14 Office and the Firestone Company inspecting gas masks; and

15           WHEREAS, Not only did Mrs. Desmarais help the war effort on the home front, she also  
16 lent her caring to our soldiers overseas, writing notes and slipping them into the masks before  
17 they were shipped overseas; and

18           WHEREAS, Mrs. Desmarais was a dedicated military wife. She was an active member

1 of the Officers' Wives' Club in the United States Army and always made a loving home for her  
2 family even though military life necessitated moving to new homes more than twenty times. She  
3 and her family lived in many places and countries around the world, including Germany and the  
4 Philippines, and eventually settled down in North Kingstown; and

5 WHEREAS, While living in the Philippines, Mrs. Desmarais volunteered at the  
6 orphanage in Quezon City and assisted the First Lady's effort to prepare food after the typhoon in  
7 1972. While living in Germany, she was called upon, in the middle of the night, to help process  
8 American refugees back to the United States upon Russia's invasion of Czechoslovakia; and

9 WHEREAS, Caring and gentle, Mrs. Desmarais was blessed with the love of her husband  
10 and children and was often sought out for her wisdom. She adored and doted on her beautiful  
11 grandchildren, Shannon, Caitlin, Fenwick, Kevan, Mykahla, and William and often accompanied  
12 them to Fenway Park for a Red Sox game; and

13 WHEREAS, In the community, Mrs. Desmarais was a devoted communicant of St.  
14 Francis De Sales Church where she sang in the church choir for many years. She also learned to  
15 use computers in order to keep in touch with friends and family and to research her family tree;  
16 and

17 WHEREAS, Mrs. Desmarais was the heart and soul of her family. Her kindheartedness  
18 and sincerity made all around her feel cherished and special. She truly enriched the lives of all  
19 who had the good fortune to have known her and she will be dearly missed; now, therefore be it

20 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and  
21 Providence Plantations hereby expresses our deepest sympathy on the passing of Helen Claire  
22 Desmarais; and be it further

23 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to  
24 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to Michael and Diane Desmarais and Family, and  
25 Coreen and Fenwick Gardiner and Family.

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