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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives are saddened to learn of the death of
4 legendary actor Eugene Allen "Gene" Hackman, formerly of
5 Danville, who passed away on February 18, 2025; and

6 WHEREAS, Gene Hackman was born to Anna Lyda Elizabeth and
7 Eugene Ezra Hackman in San Bernardino, California on January
8 30, 1930; he resided in Danville, and he later attended Storm
9 Lake High School in Iowa before dropping out at age 16; lying
10 about his age, he joined the U.S. Marine Corps, where he served
11 as a radio field operator stationed in Qingdao, China and
12 Shanghai until 1949; he was then reassigned to Hawaii and
13 Japan until being discharged in 1951; he enrolled at the
14 University of Illinois, studying journalism and television
15 production; and

16 WHEREAS, Gene Hackman began pursuing a career in acting in
17 1956, joining the Pasadena Playhouse in California, where he
18 befriended aspiring actor Dustin Hoffman; the pair, along with
19 other Californi-based actors, moved to New York City in the
20 1960s; and

21 WHEREAS, Gene Hackman began performing in many
22 Off-Broadway plays, including Witness for the Prosecution in

1 1957; he also starred in various bit roles, including in the
2 film Mad Dog Coll and on multiple television series, including
3 in Tallahassee 7000 and Route 66; he made his Broadway debut in
4 Children From Their Games in 1963, and he starred in the huge
5 Broadway success Any Wednesday in 1964; and

6 WHEREAS, Gene Hackman received his first credited film
7 role in Lilith in 1964; he also starred in the biographical
8 crime drama Bonnie and Clyde, earning him an Academy Award
9 nomination for Best Supporting Actor in 1967; he then returned
10 to Broadway while continuing to take roles in both film and
11 television; and

12 WHEREAS, Gene Hackman was nominated for a second Academy
13 Award for Best Supporting Actor for his role in I Never Sang
14 for My Father in 1970, and he won his first Academy Award for
15 Best Actor for his role in The French Connection in 1971; he
16 starred in ten films over the next three years, making him the
17 most prolific actor in Hollywood at the time; during that
18 time, he starred in the comedy-drama Scarecrow, which won the
19 Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival, and in The
20 Conversation, which was nominated for several Academy Awards
21 and also won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes; and

22 WHEREAS, Gene Hackman spent the 1980s alternating between
23 leading and supporting roles, including in All Night Long in

1 1981, Reds in 1981, and Eureka in 1983; he played a high school
2 basketball coach in Hoosiers in 1986, which was named the
3 fourth greatest sports film of all time by the American Film
4 Institute in 2008; he also starred in the western Unforgiven
5 in 1992, earning him a Golden Globe for Best Supporting Actor;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, Gene Hackman continued to act in many films,
8 including Under Suspicion in 2000, The Replacements in 2000,
9 Behind Enemy Lines in 2001, Heartbreakers in 2001, and The
10 Royal Tenenbaums, one of the most iconic roles of his career,
11 earning him the Golden Globe Award for Best Actor in a Motion
12 Picture Musical or Comedy; he made his final televised
13 appearance on Diners, Drive-Ins, and Dives in 2008; and

14 WHEREAS, After Gene Hackman retired from acting, he,
15 alongside archeologist Daniel Lenihan, wrote three historical
16 fiction novels, including Wake of the Perdido Star in 1999,
17 Justice for None in 2004, and Escape from Andersonville in
18 2008; he also narrated four episodes of the NFL Films
19 documentary series Americas Game: The Super Bowl Champions in
20 2007 and two documentaries related to the Marine Corps,
21 including the Unknown Flag Raiser of Iwo Jima in 2016 and We
22 the Marines in 2017; and

23 WHEREAS, Gene Hackman married Faye Maltese in 1956, and

1 together they had three children, Christopher Allen, Elizabeth
2 Jean, and Leslie Anne Hackman; the couple divorced in 1986; he
3 married Betsy Arakawa in 1991, and they remained married until
4 their deaths in 2025; and

5 WHEREAS, Gene Hackman leaves behind a legacy of celebrated
6 acting and iconic roles; therefore, be it

7 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
8 HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
9 we mourn the passing of Eugene Allen "Gene" Hackman and extend
10 our sincere condolences to his family, friends, and all who
11 knew and loved him; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
13 presented to the family of Gene Hackman and the City of
14 Danville as an expression of our deepest sympathy.