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SENATE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate are saddened
3 to learn of the death of award-winning actor Gene Hackman,
4 formerly of Danville, who passed away in February 2025; and

5 WHEREAS, Gene Hackman was born Eugene Allen Hackman to
6 Eugene Ezra Hackman and Anna Lyda Gray in San Bernardino,
7 California in 1930; he and his family settled in Danville,
8 Illinois, and he attended Danville High School; he enlisted in
9 the U.S. Marine Corps at the age of 16 after lying about his
10 age, and he worked as a radio operator while stationed in
11 China, Japan, and Hawaii during the late 1940s; and

12 WHEREAS, Gene Hackman returned to Danville briefly after
13 his military service, trying a stint as a camera operator at
14 WDAN-TV, before relocating to California; while there, he
15 studied under the Pasadena Playhouse, where he and Dustin
16 Hoffman were labeled "Least Likely to Succeed"; he then
17 journeyed to New York, working as a doorman and a waiter before
18 he began landing stage, television, and film roles; and

19 WHEREAS, Gene Hackman made his film debut with a small,
20 but credited, part in Lilith (1964), opening the door for a
21 career that would span decades and transcend genres and
22 consisted of over 80 films, including such classics as Bonnie

1 and Clyde (1967), The French Connection (1971), The Poseidon
2 Adventure (1972), Superman (1978), Hoosiers (1986),
3 Mississippi Burning (1988), Unforgiven (1992), The Firm
4 (1993), The Birdcage (1996), Enemy of the State (1998), The
5 Replacements (2000), The Royal Tenenbaums (2001), and Runaway
6 Jury (2003); and

7 WHEREAS, Gene Hackman's talents were recognized by the
8 film industry throughout his career; for his early work in The
9 French Connection, he was nominated and won his first Oscar,
10 Golden Globe Award, and BAFTA Award; over the course of his
11 expansive body of work, he won two Oscars, three Golden Globe
12 Awards, two BAFTA Awards, one Screen Actors Guild Award, and
13 numerous other awards; his career was further highlighted and
14 honored when he received the Cecil B. DeMille Award at the 2003
15 Golden Globe Awards; and

16 WHEREAS, Gene Hackman, later in life, added published
17 writer to his list of artistic achievements; he coauthored
18 three historical fiction novels with Daniel Lenihan, Wake of
19 the Perdido Star (1999), Justice for None (2004), and Escape
20 from Andersonville (2008); he also authored the Western novel
21 Payback at Morning Peak (2011) and the police thriller Pursuit
22 (2013); and

23 WHEREAS, Gene Hackman retained a connection to his boyhood

1 hometown of Danville, revisiting the city several times over
2 the years, including a meet-and-greet fundraising event to
3 save the Fischer Theatre in the 1980s; in turn, he was honored
4 with a plaque at Danville High School and featured in a
5 downtown mural with other notable former residents; and

6 WHEREAS, Gene Hackman was known for his ability to garner
7 the trust of audiences with the sincerity of his acting; never
8 one to be limited as a one-character actor, he kept audiences
9 returning to witness the versatility, quality, and integrity
10 of his craft; his legacy will live on through the characters he
11 brought to the silver screen and his impact on cinema;
12 therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL
14 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
15 Gene Hackman and extend our sincere condolences to his family,
16 friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
18 presented to the family of Gene Hackman as an expression of our
19 deepest sympathy.