



SR0365

LRB104 14055 LAW 27187 r

1 SENATE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate are saddened  
3 to learn of the death of James Wilson Thomas, who passed away  
4 on May 1, 2025; and

5 WHEREAS, James Thomas was born to Vivian and Wilson Thomas  
6 in Kankakee on January 20, 1941; he graduated from Kankakee  
7 High School in May 1959; he attended MacMurray College in  
8 Jacksonville and graduated with honors from the University of  
9 Illinois Urbana-Champaign in 1963; he married his wife, Jo  
10 Ann, in Freeport in 1964; he earned a master's degree in  
11 political science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in  
12 1967; he and his family moved to Peoria in 1971; and

13 WHEREAS, James Thomas taught history and political science  
14 at Illinois Central College (ICC); during his career, he was  
15 an active member of the faculty, organizing the Young  
16 Democrats at ICC and founding the Illinois College Model  
17 Government Program to foster legislative experiences for  
18 college students in Springfield for many years; after serving  
19 as a professor for 35 years, he retired in 2006; and

20 WHEREAS, James Thomas worked for the Democratic party  
21 throughout his life; he was elected precinct committeeman,  
22 twice attended the Democratic National Convention as a

1 delegate for President Jimmy Carter, and served as a member of  
2 the Peoria County Board for 20 years; during his tenure on the  
3 county board, he established the Art in Peoria courthouse  
4 project and served as president of the Tri-County Regional  
5 Planning Commission; and

6 WHEREAS, James Thomas supported the ACLU, the National  
7 Wildlife Federation, the Sierra Club, and the Audubon Society;  
8 he was active in numerous community activities, including  
9 serving as a volunteer and contributor to Wildlife Prairie  
10 Park, the Western Avenue Greenway Project, the West Bluff Word  
11 newspaper, and the Uplands Neighborhood Association; he also  
12 coached youth soccer and was a member of Westminster  
13 Presbyterian Church; and

14 WHEREAS, James Thomas sang in the Peoria Philharmonic  
15 Chorale and the chorus of the Peoria Opera Company for many  
16 years, and he enjoyed playing his guitar and singing with  
17 friends; he was also an avid gardener and enjoyed traveling  
18 after retirement; and

19 WHEREAS, James Thomas was preceded in death by his sister,  
20 Judith Crum; and

21 WHEREAS, James Thomas is survived by his wife; his  
22 children, Amanda Thomas, Joshua Thomas, and Martha (Matthew)

1 Fleckenstein; five grandchildren; and his siblings, David  
2 Birchfield, Betty Hanners, Peggy Jatala, Mary Catherine  
3 Thomas, and Rebecca Susan Thomas; therefore, be it

4       RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL  
5 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of  
6 James Wilson Thomas and extend our sincere condolences to his  
7 family, friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be it  
8 further

9       RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
10 presented to the family of James Thomas as an expression of our  
11 deepest sympathy.