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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate are saddened to learn of the death of William Eugene "Bill" Stewart, who passed away on December 6, 2025; and

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WHEREAS, Bill Stewart was born in Kewanee to Ralph and Elizabeth (Moraski) Stewart on November 18, 1934 and attended St. Stanislaus Grade School; he was a top 10 academic graduate of the Kewanee High School Class of 1952, where he was a member of the 1951 hall of fame football team; he attended three semesters at the University of Illinois before joining the United States Navy; and

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WHEREAS, Bill Stewart was the top graduate of his Navy flight school class and a very gifted aviator; he was a night fighter jet interceptor tactics instructor at the Naval Air Station Key West, Florida, before transferring to "The Be-Devilers" of Fighter Squadron 74 (VF-74), where he flew the U.S. Navy's first supersonic fighter, the F-4D Skyray; he completed an eight month North Atlantic/Mediterranean Cruise on the USS Franklin D. Roosevelt (CV-42), where he accumulated over 125 carrier arrested landings; he was selected to perform in a night carrier operational exercise for President Eisenhower in 1958; and

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1 WHEREAS, Bill Stewart returned to the University of
2 Illinois after completing his military service and, by using
3 his G.I. Bill, graduated with a Bachelor of Science in
4 Mathematics; he continued serving his country in the Naval
5 Reserve, flying the F9F Panther out of the Naval Air Station in
6 Glenview; and

7 WHEREAS, Bill Stewart moved to Washington, D.C. in 1960,
8 where he received his Juris Doctor from Georgetown Law School;
9 during his second year of law school, he switched to night
10 school, enabling him to work as a patent examiner at the United
11 States Patent Office in the Mechanical Secrecy Division, where
12 he handled classified patent applications relating to military
13 weapons systems and the NASA Space Program; at the completion
14 of law school, he worked for three years at Covington &
15 Burling, Washington, D.C.'s largest and most prestigious law
16 firm, where he participated in major international anti-trust
17 litigation before the Federal Trade Commission; and

18 WHEREAS, Bill Stewart moved back to Kewanee in 1965,
19 opening his private law practice, where he advised clients for
20 over 55 years; he served as a public defender and prosecutor
21 and gave legal counsel to several local municipalities; he
22 also provided pro bono legal service to several charities and
23 non-profits in the area and taught business law at Black Hawk
24 East for 10 years; and

1 WHEREAS, Bill Stewart was a member of the Kewanee Rotary
2 Club for over 60 years, where he was a director, past
3 president, and a Paul Harris Fellow; he spent many years as a
4 board member on the Kewanee Schools Foundation and served on
5 the Kewanee High School Hall of Fame Committee; he served in
6 several leadership positions in the Boy Scouts of America,
7 including executive board member of the Prairie Council,
8 district chairman, and a Webelos Leader, for which he was
9 awarded the Silver Beaver; he was a lifetime member of the VFW
10 and the American Legion; and

11 WHEREAS, Bill Stewart was an avid outdoorsman and enjoyed
12 camping, fishing, frogging, and hunting; he was a lifelong
13 runner and could often be seen running with one of his beloved
14 labrador retrievers, Aquarius, Pudge, Magnum, or Cherry; he
15 won his age group multiple times in the Run Your Ice Off 5K and
16 the Hog Day Stampede; he was also very proud of his Polish
17 heritage and enjoyed visiting his extended family in Poland;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, Bill Stewart was preceded in death by his wife,
20 Marjabelle; his parents; his brothers, Bob and Ben; and his
21 sister, Betty Lou; and

22 WHEREAS, Bill Stewart is survived by his son, Commander

1 William C. (Sherri) Stewart, USN (Ret.); his grandsons, Cole
2 and Drew Stewart; his brothers, Bernie, Bruce, and Bryan;
3 several nieces and nephews; and two lifelong dear friends and
4 classmates, Ron Kempin and Bobby Beauprez; therefore, be it

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

10 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
11 presented to the family of Bill Stewart as a symbol of our
12 deepest sympathy.