



SR0710

LRB104 21361 RMO 36272 r

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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 Colonel Gene Walter Blade of Springfield, who passed away on March 21, 2026; and

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WHEREAS, Gene Blade, the son of Oscar and Stella (Brandvold) Blade, was born in North Henderson on September 12, 1934; he was raised on a farm near Cameron and completed his early education in the one-room Shortsville School, later graduating from Monmouth High School; he earned a degree in economics from the University of Illinois and graduated from the United States Army War College; he married Marilyn (Dugan) Blade in 1954; and

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WHEREAS, Gene Blade farmed and also owned and operated a Firestone Tire franchise in Monmouth; and

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WHEREAS, Gene Blade began his military career as a Private in the Illinois Army National Guard, was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in 1962, and rose to the rank of Colonel; he received a variety of ribbons and medals, including the Legion of Merit; and

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WHEREAS, Gene Blade served as the United States Property and Fiscal Officer (USPFO) for the Illinois Army and Air

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1 National Guard from 1980 through 1994; upon retiring from the
2 military after 40 years of service, he acted as special
3 consultant on contract negotiations for Hanson Professional
4 Services for 15 years; and

5 WHEREAS, Gene Blade served for many years on the selection
6 board for the United States Military Service Academies; he was
7 a board member and chairman of numerous city and county
8 Economic Development Commissions in Illinois; he was a
9 lifelong member of the American Legion and belonged to the
10 Military Officers Association of America; in recent years, he
11 served as emcee for military retiree luncheons; and

12 WHEREAS, Gene Blade was an active member of his Lutheran
13 church, serving as a member and chairman of numerous
14 committees throughout his life; and

15 WHEREAS, Gene Blade enjoyed woodworking, golf, playing
16 cards, and having coffee with friends; for decades, he was
17 committed to physical fitness and completed daily
18 early-morning workouts at the YMCA; he was devoted to his
19 family above all, and he and his wife enjoyed taking river boat
20 cruises and cross-country trips on Amtrak; and

21 WHEREAS, Gene Blade will be remembered for his positive
22 outlook, tremendous work ethic, and steadfast leadership; one

1 of his guiding principles was the Army motto "Mission First,
2 People Always", which was reflected in his professional
3 philosophy and personal character; and

4 WHEREAS, Gene Blade was preceded in death by his parents
5 and his brother and sister-in-law, Dale and Dorothy Blade; and

6 WHEREAS, Gene Blade is survived by his wife of 71 years,
7 Marilyn; his daughter, Carol (Darryl) Yochem; his son, Douglas
8 (Patricia) Blade; his sister-in-law, Donna DeWaele; four
9 grandchildren; three great-granddaughters; his nephew; and two
10 nieces; therefore, be it

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

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