



SR0808

LRB104 21969 RMO 37932 r

1 SENATE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate are saddened
3 to learn of the death of Leroy G. McDaniels of Springfield, who
4 passed away on April 30, 2026; and

5 WHEREAS, Leroy McDaniels, the son of Lillie Mae (McDaniel)
6 Daniels and Harry Flake, was born in Springfield on August 9,
7 1945; his lifelong commitment to gymnastics began at Feitshans
8 High School, where he served as team captain before graduating
9 in 1964; and

10 WHEREAS, Leroy McDaniels worked for Springfield's
11 Department of Recreation for 10 years and developed the city's
12 first and only tumbling team, Flip Flops; together with his
13 wife, Merrill, he founded L&M Gymnastics in 1975 and ran the
14 business for 49 years, also accepting an invitation to open a
15 second location in Pekin; he was a recurring summer coach at
16 the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and the University
17 of Illinois Chicago for many years in addition to teaching
18 physical education at Blessed Sacrament School and serving as
19 a liaison worker for Springfield District 186; and

20 WHEREAS, Leroy McDaniels, known to his gymnasts as Coach
21 Leroy, made worldwide connections through his dedication to
22 the sport; he escorted gymnasts to 12 countries, including a

1 performance at The Expo '92 in Seville, Spain, where the US
2 Commander General designated the team as "Goodwill
3 Ambassadors"; L&M Gymnastics hosted athletes and teams from
4 England and the Philippines as well as world-class gymnast
5 Kurt Thomas, and Olympian Dominique Dawes joined the
6 organization on its float at the State fair; and

7 WHEREAS, Leroy McDaniels made a lasting impact on the
8 Springfield community and beyond; he coached countless
9 champions at the state, national, and international levels and
10 was proclaimed the Trainer of Champions by the State Journal
11 Register; he was inducted into the Springfield Sports Hall of
12 Fame as a Friend of Sports in 1998; and

13 WHEREAS, Leroy McDaniels was preceded in death by his
14 parents and his brother, Jackie Daniels; and

15 WHEREAS, Leroy McDaniels is survived by his wife of 59
16 years, Merrill; his son, Tim Garrison; his siblings, Eugene
17 Daniels, Nora Gilmer, and Lorraine (Mitchell) Lathan; his
18 aunt, Roberta Rhoades; many nieces, nephews, great-nieces,
19 great-nephews, great-great-nieces, great-great-nephews, and
20 cousins; and his godchildren, Marci Kristoff and Ryanne
21 Glasper; therefore, be it

22 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL

1 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
2 Leroy G. McDaniels and extend our sincere condolences to his
3 family, friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be it
4 further

5 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
6 presented to the family of Leroy McDaniels as an expression of
7 our deepest sympathy.