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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 Louis L. Mervis of Danville, who passed away on October 8, 2017; and

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WHEREAS, Louis Mervis was born in Danville to Isadore and Martha Ann Friedman Mervis on August 26, 1934; he graduated from Roselawn Grade School and became a standout at Danville High School, where he was an honor student, excelled at football, baseball, and wrestling, sang in the a cappella choir, and edited sports news for the Maroon and White newspaper; he married Sybil Stern in Bloomington on August 10, 1958; and

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WHEREAS, Louis Mervis attended Indiana University, where he joined the Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity and rose to president during his sophomore year; he served on the Board of Aeons and helped integrate the Bloomington barbershops; he also served as vice president of his junior class and ran for student body president; he graduated magna cum laude in 1956 with an accounting degree; he immediately joined the military as a second lieutenant in the tank division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky; and

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WHEREAS, Louis Mervis returned to Danville to join his

1 father in their family scrap business; he expanded the business  
2 by purchasing several other scrap yards; today, Mervis  
3 Industries is still based in Danville and is one of the largest  
4 family-owned scrap processing companies in the United States;  
5 he served as president of the Chicago chapter of the Institute  
6 of Scrap Iron and Steel; and

7 WHEREAS, At just 29 years of age, Louis Mervis won a seat  
8 on the local school board, one of the youngest people ever  
9 elected to the Danville District 118 Board of Education; he  
10 served two terms and was president of the board when the  
11 district went to half-day sessions to force passage of a  
12 much-needed school referendum; he helped settle a potential  
13 teacher's strike in 1976; at the request of Governors James  
14 Thompson and Jim Edgar, he served 17 years on the Illinois  
15 State Board of Education, several as chairman; he later served  
16 as education task force chair for the Illinois Business  
17 Roundtable; he was recognized by the National Association of  
18 State School Boards as one of three outstanding school board  
19 members in the United States; and

20 WHEREAS, Louis Mervis served as a Director of the Old  
21 National Bank from 1985 until 2004; he served as chair of the  
22 city zoning board, President and Campaign Chair of the Danville  
23 United Way, Vice President of Lakeview Hospital, and chair of  
24 the regional board for Provena Hospitals in central Illinois;

1 he was a member of the building committee for the Mervis unit  
2 of the local Boys and Girls Club; and

3 WHEREAS, One of the proudest achievement's of Louis Mervis  
4 was the Danville Area Economic Development Corporation, now  
5 known as Vermilion Advantage; he was a founding member and  
6 served as president and adviser; he played a significant role  
7 in bringing numerous businesses to the area; he re-purposed  
8 many of the area's abandoned buildings; he aided in the  
9 construction of the Danville library; and

10 WHEREAS, Louis Mervis endowed chairs at his collegiate alma  
11 mater; he made the initial gift to fund Illinois Promise, a  
12 program to help minority and first-in-the-family college  
13 students graduate from the University of Illinois without debt;  
14 he funded four scholarships in the Borns program; a scholarship  
15 at the Kelley School of Business was funded in his name, as a  
16 gift from his children; his family has provided 92 scholarships  
17 to Danville Area Community College students over the years; he  
18 and his wife funded several initiatives at Indiana University;  
19 they established the chair in Jewish Culture and the Arts in  
20 the Robert and Sandra Borns Jewish Studies Program at Indiana  
21 University; and

22 WHEREAS, Louis Mervis was awarded many honors over the  
23 years, including being chosen Danville's First Citizen in 1978

1 at the age of 44; he and his wife were honored by the Danville  
2 District 118 School Foundation in 2002; as a couple, they were  
3 inducted into the first Vermilion County Business Hall of Fame  
4 in 2012; they were recognized at the Danville Area Community  
5 College Founders Day in 2013 and were awarded the Indiana  
6 University Foundation President's Medallion in May of 2013; in  
7 May of 2017, Lou was one of two leaders to be awarded the first  
8 honorary associate degree from Danville Area Community  
9 College; and

10 WHEREAS, Louis Mervis was a member of Congregation Anshe  
11 Knesset Israel in Danville for 80 years until it closed; he  
12 then joined Congregation Shaarey Tefila in Carmel, Indiana; he  
13 was also a member of the Standard Club in Chicago and the  
14 Jaycees, who awarded him their Distinguished Service Award; and

15 WHEREAS, Louis Mervis coached his sons' ball teams; in  
16 1995, he purchased the local ice hockey team, renaming it the  
17 Danville Wings; he established it as a Junior A youth hockey  
18 team and helped develop it into the most outstanding Junior A  
19 hockey program in America; the Wings sent more than 260 young  
20 men to colleges and universities on scholarships as Division I  
21 players; the team won the North American Hockey League  
22 community service award for four consecutive years - more than  
23 any other team; and

1           WHEREAS, Louis Mervis was active on the political scene for  
2 years, always supporting the best candidates regardless of  
3 political affiliation; and

4           WHEREAS, Louis Mervis enjoyed following the Chicago Bears,  
5 the St. Louis Cardinals, and the Chicago Blackhawks, listening  
6 to classical music, and relaxing at Riverbend, his home in the  
7 countryside; he also enjoyed tennis with his favorite partners,  
8 Coach Paul Shebby and Bill Stuebe; and

9           WHEREAS, Louis Mervis was preceded in death by his parents  
10 and his sister, Selma Young; and

11           WHEREAS, Louis Mervis is survived by his wife of 59 years,  
12 Sybil; his children, Adam (Laurel Kroack), Phillip (Sheryl  
13 Facktor), Michael (Julie Weisfeld), Joshua (Lynn Eicken), and  
14 Ellen (Liam Tully), and those he raised as if they were his  
15 children, Jeffrey Cohodes, Pavel Nejezchleb, and Carla  
16 DuChene; his grandchildren, Alec, Devon, and Audra, Isaac,  
17 Joseph, Sam, and Gabriel, and Zoe, Gideon, Solomon, Meira, and  
18 Camille; and his sister, Jacqueline (Dr. Ted Silberstein) Mack;  
19 therefore, be it

20           RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDREDTH GENERAL  
21 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of  
22 Louis L. Mervis, and extend our sincere condolences to his

1 family, friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be it  
2 further

3       RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
4 presented to the family of Louis Mervis as an expression of our  
5 deepest sympathy.