



SR0589

LRB103 35108 LAW 65065 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 Ruth A. (Cohen) Colby, who was born on on February 8, 1954 and passed away on October 15, 2023; and

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WHEREAS, Ruth Colby served as the president and CEO of Silver Cross Hospital since October 1, 2017, previously serving as senior vice president and chief strategy officer for 12 years; under her leadership, the hospital earned national recognition in safety, quality, and experience, and it opened Will County's first and only Level 3 neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) in 2022, introduced an open-heart surgery program in 2019, and championed the Midwest Institute for Robotic Surgery at Silver Cross in 2012; she also forged partnerships with several leading Chicago health systems, including the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab for inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation services, University of Chicago Medicine for cancer services and neurosciences, the Rush University Medical Center for lung surgery, the Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital for pediatric and neonatal services, and US HealthVest to build the 110-bed Silver Oaks Behavioral Hospital on the Silver Cross Campus, which opened in early 2019; and

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WHEREAS, Throughout her tenure, Ruth Colby worked closely

1 with the board of directors of Silver Cross Hospital to set the
2 organization's vision and strategic direction; her exceptional
3 business acumen and visionary leadership led to
4 transformational growth for Silver Cross Hospital over the
5 years, expanding from a 289-bed hospital when the hospital
6 opened its New Lenox campus in 2012 to 348 beds today, with
7 medical staff members increasing from 350 to more than 1,200;
8 she also expanded the hospital's footprint through successful
9 ventures in surgery, imaging services, and medical group
10 expansions, with the hospital now having more than a dozen
11 locations throughout its service area in Will County; and

12 WHEREAS, Ruth Colby's passion for achieving health equity
13 and helping the less advantaged in the hospital's service
14 area, particularly on the east side of Joliet, led to the
15 creation of the Silver Cross Healthy Community Commission
16 (HCC) in 2008; under her guidance, this community-based
17 organization has been focused on creating a stronger,
18 healthier future by providing support for education, workforce
19 development training, and enrichment activities for youth to
20 improve the quality of life for the communities served, and it
21 has awarded over \$3 million in educational scholarships,
22 workforce development, and grants to numerous east-side Joliet
23 residents and organizations since its founding; and

24 WHEREAS, Ruth Colby was also very active in healthcare

1 associations and organizations; she served as chair-elect of
2 the Illinois Health and Hospital Association (IHA) and was
3 slated to become chair in 2024; recently, she had also been
4 appointed to the American Hospital Association's Regional
5 Planning Board for Region 5; she was also a past president of
6 the Society for Healthcare Strategy and Market Development, an
7 American Hospital Association group; and

8 WHEREAS, Ruth Colby was a passionate advocate for the
9 community, generously giving her time and talents to numerous
10 community boards, including as chair of the Will County Center
11 for Economic Development, on the board of the Will County
12 Children's Advocacy Center, and as a member of the United Way
13 of Will County Pillars Society, the Joliet Rotary Club, and
14 the Economic Club of Chicago; and

15 WHEREAS, Ruth Colby was the recipient of numerous
16 accolades, including receiving a national award for Individual
17 Personal Achievement from the Society for Healthcare Strategy
18 and Market Development in 2009, being named a Notable Woman in
19 Healthcare and a Notable Woman Executive over age 50 by
20 Crain's Chicago Business in 2019, receiving the Athena Award
21 from the Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry in
22 2021, and being named the New Lenox Citizen of the Year by the
23 New Lenox Chamber of Commerce and a Notable Healthcare
24 Executive by Crain's Chicago Business, both in 2023; at the

1 time of her passing, she was to receive the Distinguished
2 Citizen Award from the Rainbow Council of the Boy Scouts; and

3 WHEREAS, Ruth Colby was the wife of Donald M. DeFrank; the
4 mother of David (Becky Riffkin) Chodak; the sister of Judy
5 (Steven) Dolins; the sister-in-law of Sue DeFrank and Joan
6 Beeler; and the aunt of Maddie Dolins, First Lieutenant Dr.
7 Michael (Meredith) Beeler of the USN, and Gabi Kastel;
8 therefore, be it

9 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL
10 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
11 Ruth A. (Cohen) Colby and extend our sincere condolences to
12 her family, friends, and all who knew and loved her; and be it
13 further

14 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
15 presented to the family of Ruth Colby as an expression of our
16 deepest sympathy.