



HR1333

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives are saddened to learn of the death of Ronald E. "Ron" Gray of Jacksonville, who passed away on June 7, 2016; and

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WHEREAS, Ronald Gray was born in Salina, Kansas to Clarence and Mary Gray on December 27, 1936; he graduated from Sacred Heart High School in Salina and attended Kansas Wesleyan University; and

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WHEREAS, Ronald Gray worked in sales in Salina, Kansas and then North Platte, Nebraska, before moving to Springfield to manage the WMAY radio station; in 1968, he moved his family to Jacksonville to manage WJIL radio which began an almost 50-year love affair with the Jacksonville community; and

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WHEREAS, Ronald Gray was active in the American Business Club and served as Chairman for the Chamber of Commerce, the Comprehensive Planning Committee, the CACHE campaign, and other committees; he also worked with the Central Park Plaza Association and Chapin Big Country Days; and

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WHEREAS, Ronald Gray received numerous honors for his work, including Jaycees Boss of the Year, American Business Club

1 National Project Manager of the Year, the Illinois College
2 Distinguished Service Award, the Friend of the Theatre Award,
3 and most recently, he was elected a Rotary Club Paul Harris
4 Fellow and received the Chamber Circle of Excellence Award; and

5 WHEREAS, After retiring from WJIL, Ronald Gray managed the
6 Holiday Inn in Jacksonville and served on the Jacksonville Area
7 Convention and Visitors Bureau Board; it was that involvement
8 that led to the establishment of the Grierson Society and
9 General Grierson Civil War Days, a tourism attraction that
10 brought visitors to the area for 20 years; he received the
11 first Friend of Tourism award from the Bureau; and

12 WHEREAS, Ronald Gray's passion for history led to many
13 other community projects, the Save the Wheel committee that
14 brought the ferris wheel to Community Park, helping to
15 establish the Woodlawn Farm Underground Railroad site and the
16 Jacksonville Parks Foundation, and the restoration of the
17 Historic Bandstands at Prairie Land and Community Park; he
18 loved old houses, antique cars, radios and circus toys, riding
19 his scooter around Jacksonville and Marco Island, Florida, and
20 driving his "bucket list" 2002 Camaro convertible; he cherished
21 his friends and family and took great pleasure in the
22 accomplishments of his five grandsons and his only
23 granddaughter, who teasingly called him "Papa Pufferfish", and
24 the joy of a new generation of great grandbabies to spoil; and

1 WHEREAS, Ronald Gray was preceded in death by his parents;
2 his sister, Betty Jane Gray; and his first wife, Joyce Knudsen
3 Gray; and

4 WHEREAS, Ronald Gray is survived by his wife, Mary Riley
5 Gray; his son, Stuart Gray; his daughter, Sherri (Greg) Gray
6 Bergschneider; his stepchildren, Chris (Cheryl) Green and
7 Brenda (Bob) Green Cunningham; his six grandchildren, Paul Cody
8 (Sara) Gray, Brady and Brandon (Ashley) Bergschneider, Michael
9 and Connor Cunningham, and Elena Green; his
10 great-grandchildren, Bentley, Kennedy and Hadley Gray, and
11 Parker Bergschneider; his sister, Patricia Marcotte; and four
12 nieces and nephews; therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
14 NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
15 mourn the passing of Ronald E. "Ron" Gray, and extend our
16 sincere condolences to his family, friends, and all who knew
17 and loved him; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
19 presented to the family of Ronald Gray as an expression of our
20 deepest sympathy.