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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 Donald A. Benchley of Hampshire, who passed away on January 13, 2017 at the age of 91; and

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WHEREAS, Donald Benchley was born in Evanston on April 24, 1925; after graduating from high school he entered the United States Navy serving as a radioman aboard the carrier USS Salamaua in the Pacific; near the end of his tour, he met Joyce, his wife of 69 years; and

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WHEREAS, Donald Benchley was a natural salesman; he worked with his father in the furniture business, representing several furniture and lamp manufacturers, during which time he made many lifelong friends and loyal customers; he also worked at the Taylor YMCA front desk, as an EMT for the Hampshire Fire Department, and at the Superwash car wash in Hampshire; in each job, he made friends and did what he could to make each customer's day better; and

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WHEREAS, Donald Benchley and his wife lived on George Street in Chicago when they were first married and then moved to their first house on Ridge Road in Highland Park; they later moved to a larger home in Highland Park on Princeton Avenue; their last move was to a farm in Hampshire in 1971 where they

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1 raised or kept chickens, goats, turkeys, peacocks, horses,
2 cows, as well as having many barn sales, and a massive garden;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, Donald Benchley made full use of his military
5 tuition exemption to take classes at Elgin Community College
6 for 28 years, learning glass blowing, welding, and
7 jewelry-making; his found-art welding projects were displayed
8 in galleries and outdoors in Elgin; he also took commissioned
9 work for customers; he made scale models of animals, plants,
10 and insects out of scrap metal and wood; among his creations
11 was a half-scale giraffe, a one-third-scale allosaurus, a
12 full-scale silverback gorilla, a miniature buffalo, a
13 full-scale human skeleton, a family of turtles, and a four-foot
14 spider; and

15 WHEREAS, Donald Benchley was a member of the First United
16 Methodist Church in Hampshire; his most meaningful and
17 fulfilling time was spent ministering to the homeless and those
18 in jail through the Wayside Cross Ministries; he spent more
19 than 20 years going to Aurora and Elgin, providing Bible study,
20 life lessons, and advice to those who most needed it; he was
21 Wayside's Volunteer of the Year in 1999; and

22 WHEREAS, Donald Benchley was a no-frills guy; he was
23 honest, hardworking, and dedicated to his God and his family;

1 he was an exceptional example of how to conduct oneself as a
2 husband, father, grandfather, and mentor; and

3 WHEREAS, Donald Benchley was preceded in death by his
4 parents, Henry and Margaret Benchley; and

5 WHEREAS, Donald Benchley is survived by his wife, Joyce;
6 his four children, Jeffrey (Terry) Benchley, Janet (Robert)
7 Abramson, John Benchley, and Jason (Julie) Benchley; his eight
8 grandchildren, Jeffrey Eric (Vanessa) Benchley, Justin Allen
9 (Iriss) Benchley, Courtney (Joseph) Benchley Torelli, Brittany
10 (Edward) Benchley May, Julie (Scott) Abramson Brosnan,
11 Marjorie (Jason) Abramson Kranz, Jonathon (Sheena) Abramson,
12 and Maxwell Benchley; his eight great-grandchildren; and his
13 best friend, Larry Wedding; therefore, be it

14 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDREDTH GENERAL
15 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
16 Donald A. Benchley, and extend our sincere condolences to his
17 family, friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be it
18 further

19 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
20 presented to the family of Donald Benchley as an expression of
21 our deepest sympathy.