



SR1026

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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 Thomas A. Oakley of Quincy, who passed away on April 13, 2022; and

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WHEREAS, Thomas Oakley was born to Thomas C. and Mary Susan Sullivan Oakley in Quincy on June 24, 1932; he attended Quincy public schools and graduated from Quincy High School in 1950; he graduated from Duke University in 1954 with a bachelor's degree in Economics; following graduation, he served in the Air Force Strategic Air Command as a pilot; he married Anne McDonald in Raleigh, North Carolina on December 22, 1954, and she preceded him in death in 2015; and

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WHEREAS, In 1958, Thomas Oakley returned to Quincy to re-enter the family business of Quincy Newspapers, Inc., now Quincy Media, Inc., as a fourth generation family member; in 1968, he became president of the company following the death of his father; as president/CEO from 1969 to 2008, he led the company's growth from owning and operating the Quincy Herald-Whig and WGEM AM-FM-TV to adding television stations in several markets and one additional newspaper; he resigned as president/CEO in 2008 but remained active in the company as publisher of the Herald-Whig until 2017 and as a member of the board of directors of Quincy Media until it sold its

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1 television and radio stations to Gray Media and its newspapers
2 to Phillips Media in 2021; and

3 WHEREAS, Thomas Oakley served on an untold number of
4 committees and organizations throughout his life; notably, he
5 helped found the Joint Industrial Development Commission
6 (JIDC), which was the predecessor organization to the Great
7 River Economic Development Foundation (GREDF); he was a member
8 of the Quincy University Board of Trustees and a member of the
9 National Association of Broadcasters' Board of Directors; he
10 served as a chairman of the Television Bureau of Advertising
11 and on a newspaper industry committee dealing with cross
12 ownership of television stations and newspapers; he also
13 served for over 40 years on the USGA Greens Section Committee;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, Thomas Oakley was a strong advocate for the
16 United Way and for the construction of a new YMCA building in
17 1970; he was also an active supporter of the Community
18 Foundation of Western Illinois and Northeast Missouri; and

19 WHEREAS, Thomas Oakley spent over 60 years working on
20 highway development for the Tri-States as the region was
21 bypassed in the formation of the country's interstate system
22 in 1956; through his involvement and leadership, the region
23 ultimately has become the crossroads of three major highways

1 linking the tri-state region to the rest of the country; he
2 recently donated one million dollars to fund the Tri-State
3 Development Summit at Culver Stockton College to foster
4 further, ongoing regional development work; and

5 WHEREAS, Thomas Oakley was recognized with many awards for
6 his community service, including being inducted into the
7 Quincy Area Chamber of Commerce Hall of Fame and being the
8 first recipient of the annual Boy Scout community service
9 award; he received lifetime awards from the Midwest Chapter of
10 the National Television Arts and Sciences, the Broadcasters
11 Foundation of America, the National Association of
12 Broadcasters, the Illinois Broadcasters Association, and the
13 Illinois Press Association; he was awarded an honorary degree
14 from Quincy University in 1975; a portion of the Chicago to
15 Kansas City Expressway was named the Thomas A. Oakley Highway
16 in 2009; and

17 WHEREAS, Thomas Oakley loved spending time with his
18 family, especially at family events in Florida, Quincy, and
19 the upper peninsula of Michigan; he was an avid golfer who
20 traveled all over the world to play, including 20 years of
21 trips to Scotland; he was also a frequent hunter and boater;
22 and

23 WHEREAS, Thomas Oakley was preceded in death by his

1 parents; his wife; his son, Thomas C. Oakley II; his
2 son-in-law, Stephen Winters; his daughter-in-law, Lisa Smith
3 Oakley; and his two brothers, Peter A. and David R. Oakley; and

4 WHEREAS, Thomas Oakley is survived by his son, Ralph; his
5 daughter, Mary; his grandchildren, Tom (Lesley) Van Ness, Ben
6 (Amanda) Van Ness, Allison (Dustin) Oakley Hall, Jonathan
7 (Mark Peacock) Van Ness, and Sullivan Oakley (Joseph Burg);
8 his step-grandchild, Jennifer Reekie (Don Krutmeier); his
9 great-grandchildren, Olivia Van Ness, Liam Hall, Sterling Van
10 Ness, Cameron Van Ness, Anne Hall, Emma Van Ness, and Oliver
11 Hall; his step-great-grandchildren, Isla, Campbell, Cora, and
12 Ailsa Reekie and Brynn and Carter Krutmeier; his
13 sisters-in-law, Mary Oakley, Signe Oakley, and Mabel McDonald;
14 his brother-in-law, Ralph McDonald (Meg McLaurin); and several
15 cousins, nieces, and nephews; therefore, be it

16 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL
17 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
18 Thomas A. Oakley and extend our sincere condolences to his
19 family, friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be it
20 further

21 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
22 presented to the family of Thomas Oakley as an expression of
23 our deepest sympathy.