



HR1563

LRB096 24623 GRL 44467 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives are saddened to learn of the death of William
4 L. Helvie, who passed away on December 15, 2010; and

5 WHEREAS, William Helvie was born on May 1, 1927, in Alton;
6 his parents were Harold R. and Edith F. (Anderson) Helvie; and

7 WHEREAS, William Helvie was raised in Wood River and
8 attended local grade schools and East Alton-Wood River High
9 School, where he graduated in 1945; during high school, he
10 attended carpentry class for 3 years, learning how to build
11 homes; he was on the track team in his senior year, running the
12 mile and half-mile in every track meet; he obtained several 1st
13 and 2nd place awards during the season and holds the honor of
14 2nd place in the Southwest Conference Mile and 4th place in the
15 District Mile in 1945; and

16 WHEREAS, While attending high school, William Helvie was
17 employed as a paperboy; he later became the manager of Wood
18 River News Agency; he also worked during the summers for the
19 Economy Boat Store and holidays for the Wood River Flower Shop
20 and, later, for Smit's Florist; and

21 WHEREAS, After graduating from high school, William Helvie

1 was drafted into the United States Army; after attending Ft.
2 Benjamin Harrison Army Finance School in Indiana, he was
3 shipped to Ft. Sheridan to work in the 5th Army Separation
4 Center; later, he worked in the Separation Center at Camp
5 Grant, Illinois and Camp McCoy, Wisconsin; after attending
6 basic training at Ft. Lee, Virginia, he returned to Ft.
7 Sheridan to work in Post Finance; during 1943 and 1944, he
8 constructed model airplanes for the Army, Air Force, and Navy
9 to identify German and Japanese aircraft; he was discharged in
10 1947 at the rank of Sergeant; and

11 WHEREAS, In 1947, William Helvie enrolled at Ranken
12 Technical College in a class for pattern making; after
13 graduating in 1949, he went to work at Duncan Foundry in Alton
14 in the pattern shop; and

15 WHEREAS, In 1959, William Helvie went to work for Paul
16 Worcester at Woodland Hill Cemetery as the cemetery's first
17 sexton; 2 years later, Mr. Worcester sold the cemetery to Mr.
18 Helvie, who became the first owner to live at the cemetery and
19 maintain it; he spent 40 years improving the cemetery, adding
20 the Garden features and the Veteran's Memorial with the help of
21 Wood River VFW Post 2859; he added the "Avenue of Flags", where
22 casket flags donated by veterans' families were put on poles
23 and placed along the cemetery road; he and many of his family
24 and friends placed the flags, donating their time to honor the

1 veterans, and placed a small flag on each veteran's grave; he
2 also held a public service every Memorial Day at the cemetery;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, In 1952, William Helvie joined the Rosewood
5 Heights Volunteer Fire Department to help protect his
6 community; he served as captain of a fire crew for a period of
7 time; he was later elected to serve as treasurer of the fire
8 department and, after 7 years, was appointed Trustee of the
9 Fire District due to the death of trustee George Hudson; he
10 served as treasurer of the Fire District for 26 years before he
11 retired in 1992, after 40 years in fire service; during his
12 tenure with the fire department, he served on many committees;
13 he was a member of the Illinois Fire Fighters Association, the
14 Madison County Fireman's Association, and the Madison County
15 Fire Fighters; he also bowled with the fire department bowling
16 league for several years; and

17 WHEREAS, On June 19, 1982, William Helvie was honored with
18 a plaque in Chicago from the Illinois Veterans of Foreign Wars
19 organization for his outstanding efforts in promoting
20 patriotism in his community with the flag placement display on
21 Memorial Day and Veterans Day; he was one of only 10 people in
22 the United States that year to receive the honor; and

23 WHEREAS, William Helvie served as Cub Scout committee man

1 for Pack #60 and scout troop #60; he later became the Explorer
2 Post 60 advisor; he was in scouting for 15 years and was a past
3 member of the Order of the Arrow; he helped to form the Piasa
4 Bird Trail, a 14-mile Scout Trail on the river bluffs above the
5 River Road that was walked by over 25,000 Scouts in 10 years;
6 he was also a past member of the Illinois Cemetery Association
7 and the American Cemetery Association, a lifetime member of the
8 Wood River American Legion, Post #204, and later the East Alton
9 Post #794, and a member of the Alton Eagles, Aerie #254, the
10 Wood River Moose Lodge #1349, the National Sheriffs
11 Association, and the Ranken Alumni Association; and

12 WHEREAS, William Helvie was a member of the 1st United
13 Methodist Church in Wood River for over 80 years; he served on
14 many church committees and worked on many woodworking projects
15 for the church; he also bowled on the Men's Church League for
16 several years; and

17 WHEREAS, William Helvie was preceded in death by his son,
18 Ned Helvie, and his parents; and

19 WHEREAS, William Helvie is survived by his ex-wife, Reka;
20 his son, Kip Helvie; his daughter and son-in-law, Marsha and
21 Randy Klug; his grandson, Craig Smith; his granddaughter and
22 her husband, Jessi and Bill Williams; his great-granddaughter,
23 Adelyn; his close companion, Bernice O. Cox; and the families

1 of Jimmie and Donna Powell, Teresa and Gene Bartlet, Denis and
2 Mark Northy, and Phyllis Day; therefore, be it

3 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
4 NINETY-SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
5 mourn, along with his family and friends, the passing of
6 William L. Helvie; and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
8 presented to the family of William Helvie as an expression of
9 our sympathy.