



SR1057

LRB098 20766 MST 57842 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 Richard H. Parsons of Peoria, who passed away on March 26, 2014; and

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WHEREAS, Richard Parsons was born in McAlester, Oklahoma on June 9, 1936 to Alfred Richard and Veronica Cecilia Parsons; he graduated from Taylorville High School in 1954, where he participated in football, basketball, baseball, track & field, and tennis, for which he was elected captain of the first Taylorville High School varsity tennis team; he earned his Bachelor of Science from Bradley University in 1958 and married Catherine Logan on August 9 of that same year; he served in the United States Marine Corps PLC Program; and

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WHEREAS, Tennis always played an important role in Richard Parsons's life; after graduating from Bradley University, where he continued to play tennis, he continued to play and win the Club and Bar Association mixed and men's doubles tournaments, including championships at the Mount Hawley Country Club, the Peoria Tennis Association, the Peoria Country Bar Association, and the Racquet Club of Peoria; he was 3-time winner of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers Tournament and his home and office were filled with dozens of tennis and golf trophies; and

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1 WHEREAS, Richard Parsons graduated from Washington & Lee
2 College of Law in 1961, where he was business editor of the
3 Washington & Lee Law Review and worked nearly a full-time
4 schedule for The Lexington Gazette; he completed his
5 post-graduate studies in constitutional law at Harvard Law
6 School under its judges' program in the 1980s; and

7 WHEREAS, Upon graduating from law school, Richard Parsons
8 worked for Chicago Title and Trust Company for 7 years,
9 ultimately becoming the company's youngest officer and serving
10 as one of its lobbyists in Springfield; in 1968, he moved to
11 Peoria and entered private practice and shortly thereafter
12 formed and owned the Bankers Title Company, an issuing agent
13 for Pioneer National Title Insurance Corporation; during this
14 time, he also served on the board of directors for the Peoria
15 Heights Bank, the Illinois Crown Insurance Corporation, the
16 Rock Island Title and Abstract Company, the Fairway Life
17 Insurance Corporation, the Peacock Engineering Company, and
18 Another Chicago Press Company; in the 1970s, he began to focus
19 his private practice toward criminal defense work and often
20 represented people without the funds to hire an attorney, and
21 in 1995, he became the first federal public defender for the
22 Central District of Illinois; he created the department from
23 the ground up, retiring in August of 2011; and

1 WHEREAS, Richard Parsons was active in the Democratic
2 Party; he was appointed by the Governor to the Illinois Capital
3 Development Board, where he was instrumental in obtaining
4 lights for Memorial Stadium at the University of Illinois; he
5 served as precinct committeeman and delegate to the 1972
6 Democratic National Convention, and in 1975, he was appointed
7 by the Governor to the position of commissioner/trial judge for
8 the Illinois Court of Claims, which he held for 20 years; and

9 WHEREAS, Richard Parsons continued to serve the law
10 following retirement; in 1999, the Seventh Circuit Court of
11 Appeals requested he take on the role of circuit appellate
12 defender, litigating federal cases on appeal from Illinois,
13 Wisconsin, and Indiana, and in that same year, he appeared
14 before the U.S. Supreme Court in O'Sullivan v. Boerckel; in
15 2003, he added to his duties by serving as the acting federal
16 public defender for the Southern District of Illinois, while
17 continuing with the Central District of Illinois; and

18 WHEREAS, Richard Parsons was involved in numerous legal
19 organizations, including the American Bar Association, the
20 Illinois State Bar Association, the Peoria County Bar
21 Association; he was a life-member of the National Association
22 of Criminal Defense Lawyers and a 3-time chairman of the
23 American Bar Association's Criminal Amicus Curiae Committee;
24 he served for 7 years as director of the Illinois State Bar

1 Association's Criminal Justice Council, as Amicus Curiae
2 Chairman for 4 years, as past-President of the Clarence Darrow
3 Inn of the American Inns of Court, and as past-President of the
4 Illinois Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers; in 2000, he
5 was awarded the association's Lawyer of the Year Award, the
6 first "downstater" to win; he also served a 2-year term on the
7 Board of Directors of the Peoria County Bar Association and a
8 3-year term on the Illinois Capital Litigation Trial Screening
9 Committee; he was listed in Marquis Who's Who in America; and

10 WHEREAS, Over the years, Richard Parsons taught at numerous
11 seminars for the criminal defense bar; he was on the faculty
12 for attorney training programs hosted by the Seventh Circuit
13 Court of Appeals, the Defender Services Division of the United
14 States Courts, the Federal Defenders in several districts, the
15 Wisconsin State Bar Association, the Wisconsin Association of
16 Criminal Defense Lawyers, the Indiana Association of Criminal
17 Defense Lawyers, and the Illinois Association of Criminal
18 Defense Lawyers; and

19 WHEREAS, Richard Parsons authored a number of articles in
20 several publications directed at criminal defense lawyers;
21 additionally, he acted as editor of the nationally acclaimed
22 newsletter "The Back Bencher" and he appeared on the cover of
23 the September 1987 issue of the "National Law Journal", the 3rd
24 quarter cover of the "Criminal Defense Quarterly", and the

1 front page of the Peoria Journal star on at least 2 occasions;
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3 WHEREAS, Richard Parsons co-founded the St. Patrick's Day
4 Parade in Peoria, serving as "parade chairman" for first one in
5 1981 and receiving the honor of being the grand marshal in
6 1984; he also helped organize the first Erin Feis Festival in
7 Peoria and was co-founder of the local division of the Ancient
8 Order of Hibernians, which was named the Richard H. Parsons
9 Division in honor of his efforts to foster the growth and
10 awareness of Irish heritage in Central Illinois, for which he
11 served as the chapter's president; he also served as State
12 director, board member, and officer of the State of Illinois's
13 Ancient Order of Hibernians; he was director general of the
14 Puff Club Foundation Trust and President of the Old Rumpolian
15 Society; he was co-founder of the W.C. Fields Golf League and
16 former board member of the Friends of Fatherless Boys and the
17 Knights of Columbus, Spalding Council 427, Third Degree; he was
18 also a member of the IVY Club of Peoria, the Union League Club
19 of Chicago, and the Mount Hawley Country Club, where he scored
20 his 2 holes-in-one, as well as winning the Managers's Cup; and

21 WHEREAS, Richard Parsons was a single-to-low digit
22 handicap golfer at Mount Hawley Country Club and a champion at
23 men's and mixed doubles tennis into his mid-60s; he continued
24 to be a bibliophile and master crossword puzzler late in life;

1 and

2 WHEREAS, Richard Parsons was preceded in death by his
3 sisters, Helen Murphy and Mary Ann Caster; and

4 WHEREAS, Richard Parsons is survived by his wife,
5 Catherine; his children, Karen Voss, Anne Muren, and A. Richard
6 Parsons, II; and by his 8 grandchildren; therefore, be it

7 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-EIGHTH GENERAL
8 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
9 Richard H. Parsons, and extend our sincere condolences to his
10 family, friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be it
11 further

12 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
13 presented to the family of Richard Parsons as an expression of
14 our deepest sympathy.