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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 L. "Donnie" Merlie of Westville, who passed away on July 30, 2015; and

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WHEREAS, Donnie Merlie was born in Brooks, Pennsylvania on February 28, 1922 to Vester and Rose Fava Merlie; he graduated from Westville High School in 1939 and served in the United States Army Air Corps during World War II as a "flyboy"; he co-piloted C-47 cargo planes, carrying paratroopers for the 301st Troop Carrier Squadron, 441st Troop Carrier Group; he flew in the D-Day Invasion, Operation Market Garden, and the Battle of the Bulge; he received the Air Medal, the World War II Victory Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, the EAME Theater Medal with 2 Bronze Stars, the Presidential Unit Citation, and the Purple Heart; he married Eleanor Dowiatt on July 10, 1948 in Westville; and

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WHEREAS, Donnie Merlie was honorable discharged as a Lieutenant; he then went to the University of Illinois, where he received his bachelor's and law degrees; he practiced law in Vermilion County for 55 years, retiring in 2008 at age of 86; during his career, he represented the Village of Westville and Westville schools and was instrumental in the forming of the Westville-Belgium Sanitary District; and

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1 WHEREAS, Donnie Merlie was a member of the Vermilion County
2 Airport Authority board, the Westville Lions Club, and the
3 Jaycees; for years, he and other pilots co-owned a Cessna 182,
4 which he flew to his military squadron's reunions and to go
5 quail-hunting, bringing along his bird dogs, most recently his
6 English pointers, Maggie and Spot; his passion was training his
7 well-bred dogs and watching them hunt; he also enjoyed walking,
8 golfing, and tending a large vegetable garden; in his late 80s,
9 he planted a mini-orchard of fruit trees in his backyard; he
10 was recently inducted into the Westville High School Hall of
11 Fame; and

12 WHEREAS, Donnie Merlie was preceded in death by his wife,
13 Eleanor; his son, Michael J. (Nancy); and his 3 sisters,
14 Caroline Merlie, Dora Vanzo, and Geraldine Balbach; and

15 WHEREAS, Donnie Merlie is survived by his daughters,
16 Melissa Merlie, Patty (Cliff) Merlie, and Carol (Mike)
17 Hatfield; his 4 grandchildren, Tony (Katie) Merlie, Jimmy
18 (Tina) Merlie, Angie Hatfield (Dan) Marker, and Nic Hatfield;
19 his 6 great-grandsons, Joseph, Will, Kyle, and Max Merlie and
20 Johnny and Dean Marker; his niece, Dana Clary; and his nephew,
21 Brian Vanzo; therefore, be it

22 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL

1 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of
2 Donald L. "Donnie" Merlie, and extend our sincere condolences
3 to his family, friends, and all who knew and loved him; and be
4 it further

5 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
6 presented to the family of Donnie Merlie as an expression of
7 our deepest sympathy.