



George H Ryan Sr.

February 24, 1934 - May 2, 2025

GEORGE H. RYAN, SR. 39th GOVERNOR of the STATE of ILLINOIS George H. Ryan,

Sr., 39th governor of Illinois – who energized a world-wide effort to abolish the death

penalty, saved countless lives by strengthening anti-drunk driving laws and organ

donation programs; and led ground-breaking efforts to normalize relations with Cuba –

has died peacefully at his home in Kankakee surrounded by his family at the age of 91.

A loving and attentive husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather, the centerpiece of Gov. Ryan's life was his wife of 54 years, Lura Lynn and their family,

whom he cared for and nurtured throughout his life. A pharmacist by trade, he continually demonstrated his life-long commitment to public service, especially the less

fortunate in their times of need. In public he was a consummate statesman who worked

across party lines to find compromises and win passage of projects and programs. To

friends and family, he also was generous and warm-hearted, with a lively and quick-

witted personality that showed itself through the ready smile of a proud Irishman. Gov.

Ryan began his 35-year career in elected office in 1968 as a member of the Kankakee

County Board, later serving as chairman. In 1973 he was elected to represent Kankakee in the Illinois House of Representatives. He served 10 years in the House,

including six years as the leader of the Republican caucus and two years as Speaker of

the House. In 1983, Gov. Ryan, on a Republican ticket with his good friend James R.

Thompson of Chicago, was elected lieutenant governor of Illinois, a position he held for

eight years. In 1990 he was elected the 36th Illinois secretary of state. He was re-

elected to the office in 1994 by winning 100 of Illinois' 102 counties. He launched his

single campaign for governor in 1997. In 2002, Gov. Ryan announced that he would

retire from public service. As an elected official, he made a significant impact on Illinois

in every office he held. Early in his term as governor, George Ryan was faced with one

of the more daunting duties of his position – giving the final OK for the execution of a

convicted serial killer. Before granting his approval in that case, he researched capital

punishment in Illinois and began to seriously question whether the administration of the

state's death penalty law was flawed and unjust. Gov. Ryan based his doubts on the

fact that between 1977 and 1999, 12 people had been executed under the law in Illinois, while 13 had been freed from death row based on post-trial evidence that proved they were innocent. Gov. Ryan's uneasiness about the state's capital punishment law deepened in subsequent months as he investigated the situation further. In 2000, calling the administration of the death penalty in Illinois "deeply flawed," he became the first governor in the United States to issue a blanket moratorium on further executions in the state, staying the death sentences of 163 men and women then on death row. While highly controversial at the time, in the decades since it has become clear that Gov. Ryan's moratorium was a needed antidote to an unreliable capital punishment system as convicted felons continued to be released from death row for capital crimes they did not commit. The governor's moratorium has had a long-lasting effect on the debate over capital punishment. In 2011, more than a decade after the moratorium was established in Illinois, Gov. Ryan's ultimate goal was reached when the state repealed its death penalty. The repeal was based largely on the issues of unfairness and unreliability of the justice system that he raised. And since Gov. Ryan declared the moratorium, 10 other

states have abolished the death penalty and five governors have issued blanket moratoriums. There are currently 23 states in the U.S. that do not have the death penalty. Since 2000, public support for the death penalty has dropped, and a majority of Americans now believe that the likelihood is high that under current laws an innocent person could be executed. Gov. Ryan's leadership in opposing the death penalty gained him national and international recognition, especially from death penalty opponents and civil rights activists. In 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009 and in 2010, he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize because of his leadership on the issue. In 2001 he received the Mario Cuomo Act of Courage Award from Death Penalty Focus and in 2003 received the Rose Elizabeth Bird Commitment to Justice Award. He also was honored in Italy and by the European Union. In 2003, the Colosseum in Rome was bathed in golden light for two days in honor of Governor Ryan's moratorium. Gov. Ryan's opposition to the death penalty was just one of the policy decisions he made as chief executive that countered his background as a conservative Republican. In reality, his deeply held religious beliefs, based on humanity and decency, not political partisanship, were at the heart of many of his policy decisions. In 1999 Gov. Ryan led a groundbreaking

and controversial humanitarian mission to Cuba in the wake of a devastating hurricane that struck the island. It was the first visit to the communist country by a sitting United State governor since the U.S. severed ties with Cuba in 1961. As such, it received international attention as one of the first steps designed to change the relationship between the United States and Cuba. Praise for the trip was mixed with opposition from those who sought continued isolation of the island. Gov. Ryan delivered more than \$1 million in humanitarian aid to the island and held several one-on-one meetings with Cuban President Fidel Castro, in which they discussed the expansion of educational and cultural exchanges as well as trade possibilities between Illinois and Cuba. In the aftermath of Gov. Ryan's mission, U.S.- Cuban relations began to thaw at a greater pace. In the last 23 years there has been a steady stream of federal and state government officials, business leaders and cultural groups and media travelling to Cuba, culminating with President Barak Obama's visit to the island in 2016. Gov. Ryan would visit Cuba twice more at the invitation of the Cuban government. In 1997 as secretary of state he won a hard-fought multi-year battle and secured passage of a state law that lowered the legal blood-alcohol content level from .10 percent to .08

percent. In the 25 years since the passage of the .08 law in Illinois, studies have shown that the proportion of drinking drivers in fatal crashes in Illinois dropped sharply after passage of the .08 law. The governor also won passage of a "Use It & Lose It" law that for the first time suspended the licenses of underage drivers caught using a vehicle with any alcohol in their blood system. In 1983, Gov. Ryan became one of the nation's strongest advocates for voluntary organ donation across the country with the creation of the first publicly funded organ donation awareness campaign in the United States. The campaign was tied to a new state law that allowed all drivers to volunteer to be organ donors when receiving their drivers licenses. More than 7 million Illinois residents have registered to be organ donors, one of the largest voluntary donation files in the country, all because of Gov. Ryan's 40-year-old "Life Goes On" campaign. Gov. Ryan also was a builder. One of his proudest achievements was the 1999 passage of the five-year, \$12 billion Illinois FIRST infrastructure renewal program, which built 9,500 new school classrooms in every corner of the state, built and refurbished hundreds of miles of Illinois roads, finished 580 new parks and bike trails, expanded 225 local water and

sewer systems and invested \$2 billion in school technology improvements.

And ending

years of political infighting and stalemate, Gov. Ryan funded and broke ground for the

first stages of the \$115 million Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in

Springfield, which today houses some 46,000 Lincoln artifacts. For visitors from around

the world, the Library and Museum has become a major research hub centered on the

nation's 16th president, as well as a major attraction for school children, history buffs

and tourists. In the later years of his life, Gov. Ryan's significant record of achievement

survived undiminished, even after the outcome of a federal investigation into the

administration of public contracts while he was secretary of state and governor.

Following a seven-month trial, Gov. Ryan was convicted of numerous felonies stemming

from the investigation. He served more than five years of a six-and-a-half year prison

sentence. He returned home to Kankakee after his release. George Homer Ryan, Sr.,

was born on February 24, 1934 in Maquoketa, Iowa to Jeannette (née Bowman) and

Thomas Ryan, a pharmacist. When he was five, Thomas Ryan moved the family briefly

to Chicago, and then permanently to Kankakee, Illinois, where he opened a pharmacy.

The future Gov. Ryan worked in his father's two drug stores. After graduating

from

Kankakee High School, Gov. Ryan was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1954. He served a

13-month tour in Korea, working in a base pharmacy. After his discharge, he attended

Ferris State College of Pharmacy (now Ferris State University) in Big Rapids, Michigan.

Returning to the family business after graduation, over time Gov. Ryan, his brother Tom,

sister Katie and her husband Duane Dean built his father's pair of pharmacies into a

successful chain of stores. He sold his interest in the pharmacies in 1990.

Tom Ryan

also was a prominent political figure in Kankakee County and served several terms as

mayor of Kankakee. On June 10, 1956, Gov. Ryan married his high school sweetheart,

Lura Lynn Lowe, whom he had met in an English class. Mrs. Ryan grew up in nearby

Aroma Park, where her family had lived since 1834. Her father owned one of the first

hybrid seed companies in the United States. Mrs. Ryan was an ever-present partner

with the governor during his political career while raising a large family. She was able to

energize her own interests in public service. She was a life-long advocate for children

growing up in impoverished or dangerous circumstances. She fought tirelessly against

substance abuse addiction and backed prevention services for young children that

centered on child safety and early learning classes. Mrs. Ryan also was a strong supporter of the arts, especially Illinois folk arts and crafts. Mrs. Ryan died of lung cancer in Kankakee on June 27, 2011 at the age of 77. Governor and Mrs. Ryan were the proud and loving parents of five daughters including a set of triplets – and he often joked that he went to bed with 2 daughters one night and woke up with 5! Nancy (John Coghlan), Lynda (Mike Fairman), Triplets; Julie (Jeff Koehl), Joanne and Jeanette (Jim Schneider); and one son, George Homer, Jr. (Amy) They proudly boasted of their 17 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren, as well as numerous nieces and nephews. Late in life, George had a very special relationship with Kitty Kelly, her daughter Colleen, son John and their children. The Ryan Children were so thankful that Kitty provided dad with wonderful companionship until her passing. Ryan co-authored a Book – “Until I Could Be Sure” published by Rowman and Littlefield (available on Amazon) with award winning journalist Maurice Posely about his experience with the death penalty in Illinois and how he finally came to the conclusion of his historic moratorium. He recently had the great honor and long time dream of attending the Masters Golf Tournament with his son George, Jr., in Augusta Georgia, where the great

Gary Player

greeted him with kind words and a warm handshake.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the wishes of the family or the following

charities: Duane Dean Behavioral Health Center; The George & Lura Lynn Ryan

Scholarship Fund at Kankakee Community College; VIP Service Dog Foundation.

Visitation will be held from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 6, 2025 at Schreffler Funeral

Home, Kankakee. A memorial service will be held at Noon, on Thursday, May 8, 2025 at

Asbury United Methodist Church, Kankakee.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 6. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Schreffler Funeral Home - Kankakee Chapel
1900 W. Court St.
Kankakee, IL 60901
(815) 932-2421
<https://www.schrefflerfuneralhomes.com/>

Memorial Service

MAY 8. 12:00 PM (CT)

Asbury United Methodist Church
196 S. Harrison
Kankakee, IL 60901
(815) 933-4408

Tribute Wall

OM

“ My name is Omar Muhammad, formerly Omar Saunders of the Roscetti Four. I want to personally thanks this Great Man for his courage to stand for principles. I truly miss you Mr. Ryan and I repeat your memory to my children.



Omar Muhammad - February 18 at 11:21 AM

DW

“ David W. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of George H Ryan Sr..

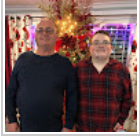
David W. - August 15, 2025 at 12:37 PM

EL

“ My deepest condolences to the Ryan's Family 🌸



Ethel Lee - May 15, 2025 at 10:46 AM



“ *Condolences to his family*



Carson Loveless - May 10, 2025 at 06:11 PM

KR

“ *Kelly Robbins lit a candle in memory of George H Ryan Sr.*



Kelly Robbins - May 10, 2025 at 10:17 AM

BW

“ *Bob Winchester lit a candle in memory of George H Ryan Sr.*



Bob Winchester - May 10, 2025 at 12:43 AM

WD

“ *George H.Ryan Sr. Was my pharmacy technician, when I needed to get medication 🍯 for my Heath issues! I really missed talking to him, when he was a Pharmacy Technician in Kankakee county! Also his brother Tom Ryan to! My sympathy goes out to his family members and his close friends of his! Rest in Peace George H.RyanSr.*

Wayne W. Day - May 08, 2025 at 08:16 PM

WD

“ I've been a really good friend of the former governor George Ryan Sr. Ever since he was a pharmacy technician at his pharmacy in Kankakee, Illinois! He was a really nice man to alot of people in the Kankakee area! He will be dearly missed! Rest in Peace, George Sr.i would love to get a copy of his funeral booklet or 📖?My sympathy for his family Members! You're in heaven now with the Lord Jesus Christ and your long lost family members to!

Wayne W. Day - May 08, 2025 at 08:03 PM

WD

I lit up a candle 🕯 in memory of George H.Ryan Sr.He will be dearly missed by his family members and close friends of him! Rest in Peace Governor Ryan!

Wayne W. Day - May 08, 2025 at 08:07 PM

WD

Goodbye, George H Ryan Sr.our former Governor of Illinois!

Wayne W. Day - May 08, 2025 at 08:09 PM



“ I had the very great privilege of working closely with my old Kankakee neighbor Governor Ryan against the death penalty in Illinois. I got to introduce him to Sister Helen Prejean. He showed political courage in very dark times. He was not a perfect man. Who of us is?! But he changed the world. His legacy is a great one. I cherish his memory.

Jennifer Bishop-Jenkins - May 08, 2025 at 07:01 PM

JG

“ *Joseph Giacchino lit a candle in memory of George H Ryan Sr.*



Joseph Giacchino - May 08, 2025 at 05:09 PM

KW

“ *Kaye F Wallace lit a candle in memory of George H Ryan Sr.*



Kaye f Wallace - May 08, 2025 at 01:35 PM

KW

From the flower girl

Kaye f Wallace - May 08, 2025 at 01:36 PM

DB

“ *Sorry for your loss*



Derald James Borton - May 08, 2025 at 12:07 AM

BT

“ *Gods' peace to the Ryan family.
As a classmate, H.S. was more then just going to school. George cared for us,years later. At one of his Rallies, He spotted me in the crowd. He acknowleged me to the crowd and made me stand up. How 'bout thatt? Another time, I was placed on a very expensive med.. My insurance was unwilling to pay for it. George went to bat and I got my med. Needless to say, since, there is a Ginaric. One of Georges' Humanitarian charecterists for people. I'm sure there are many tributes similar to mine. How can anyone forget this kind, careing man! so many times throughout our H.S. days and the last days shared. Never see another like George....
Bonnie Ray Terrell*

Bonnie Ray Terrell - May 07, 2025 at 06:53 PM

JB

“ *JOANN Ford- BOX lit a candle in memory of George H Ryan Sr.*



JOANN Ford- BOX - May 07, 2025 at 01:32 PM

VD

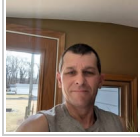
RIP. You did so much go with your life.

Valeri DeCastris - May 20, 2025 at 02:35 AM

VD

RIP. You did so much good with your life.

Valeri DeCastris - May 20, 2025 at 02:35 AM



“ *My condolences to the family I met Mr Ryan at meigs field downtown Chicago back in the early 2000s when I was a GSC mechanic for signature flight support. And he used to come in with his motorcade to go to his airplane to fly out to Springfield and there were several occasions where I got to speak to him one on one and he was a great man very kind and very genuine may he rest in peace*

Dante Malgioglio - May 06, 2025 at 08:47 PM



“ *Sending our sincere condolences to the Ryan family. He was a great person. His compassion for fairness and respect for humanity was unwavering. He did great things for our community and state.*



Alderwoman Cherry Malone Marshall family - May 06, 2025 at 08:24 PM



“ *Sincere and most deep condolences to the Ryan family. George Ryan was an icon of kindness and compassion and his plethora of accomplishments and contributions to the State of Illinois and to Kankakee County is indeed matchless.*



Joyce Shoemaker - May 06, 2025 at 04:17 PM

CF

“ Sending love



Chandler Fam - May 06, 2025 at 12:35 PM

FC

“ Think of where man's glory begins and ends, And it was a privilege to have such a friend.
We all aspire to make a difference. George did it multiple times...and showed all of us the way.

Frank Cihak - May 06, 2025 at 10:42 AM

HJ

“ My deepest condolences to the Ryan family. Many fond memories of “get togethers” at their house during my high school days. He made such a positive impact on so many and the community of K3 and beyond.

Hugh Janda - May 06, 2025 at 10:40 AM



“ George Ryan was my Chinaman, forever in his debt for his friendship and generosity to me and my family. No finer person ever in Illinois politics. He's in heaven now with Lura Lynn I'm sure and my condolences to Homer and the girls. God rest his lovely soul.
We will not see his like again.

Mike Houlihan - May 06, 2025 at 10:02 AM

TR

“ George and I were room mates for several years. I found him to be one of the most fascinating, intelligent and kind individuals that I have ever met. George taught me more about politics in 15 minutes than I had learned throughout all of my schooling. We played Bocci together and he would bust my chops multiple times daily about smoking. We discussed and debated about countless thoughts and ideas. He loved my idea that the president should be limited to only one 6 year term therefore there would be no need for any campaigning and then maybe they could really accomplish things. I missed George's company everyday for the last 12 years and when I have my nightly conversation with God (whoever she is) I will include a little message to pass on to George Tom Ruffo

Thomas Ruffo - May 06, 2025 at 02:20 AM

BF

“ Fond childhood memories of George playing the piano at my parents parties. What an incredible life full of significant accomplishments. Warmest condolences to the family. Rest in peace Mr. Ryan.

Burr Ferris - May 05, 2025 at 09:22 PM

CM

“ Deepest condolences to Nancy & her family. Gov. Ryan was a kind man & always made me feel welcome. May he rest in eternal peace.

"Bergan"
Cathie Miedema



Cathie (Bergan) Miedema - May 05, 2025 at 07:34 PM

KS

“ Dear Nancy and John and family. My deepest condolences on the passing of this big hearted man and leader. He's reunited with Lura Lynn, forever. Rest in peace, George.

Kevin Sheahan

Kevin Sheahan - May 05, 2025 at 05:01 PM

CC

“ Tony Leone was very fortunate to have the Governor and Lura Lynn come into his life . Tony loved the Ryan family . George was a mentor and a great friend during Tony's political career and after . George once said “ Tony has a lot of good ideas, and every once in a while , there is a good one .” Tony would laugh . Tony was my fiance who passed in 2021. Tony is rejoicing in heaven as his good friend has joined him .It was a privilege to know the Governor and I will never forget him . George was a good man . I wish the Ryan family peace and strength in the days and months ahead.

Cathy Cragoe

Cathy Cragoe - May 05, 2025 at 04:24 PM

ES

“ I knew George best as a registered pharmacist working in the Ryan drugstores. It was fascinating to watch the patients, customers, and public come into the store to get prescriptions filled, but more often just to share a cup of coffee and to see if George was behind the counter. George thrived on the unending interactions. As he rose in politics, he was the clear political wizard linking us locals to the wider world. George could tell us not only what was happening beyond the county borders, but even better, what those facts meant. He knew hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people by first name. George Ryan loved his family and his community. Our deepest sympathies we extend to the Ryan family for their loss. Ed Smith

Ed Smith - May 05, 2025 at 03:48 PM

FK

“ My mother in law was a heart transplant recipient, and very much appreciated the Governor's initiation of organ transplant awareness in Illinois. At the dedication of the Amtrak Memorial in Bourbonnais in 1999, which our family attended, my mother in law made sure she thanked the Governor for his leadership in organ donor awareness.

Frank Koehler - May 05, 2025 at 03:39 PM

DM

“ What a wonderful man and family. Was able to read the obituary to my father, he was heartbroken. He appreciated George as a friend, father and politician. His comments after Margi died were very special. Gos bless the Ryan family and may George RIP.

Donald Mortell & family

David Eberle Mortell - May 05, 2025 at 03:14 PM

DJ

“ DJ
David M. Jaffe
6 minutes ago
I had the privilege of seeing and having dinner with George in the last month in Ft. Myers. He was a powerful political leader but also a friend you'd have to work hard to lose. He never learned to whisper, as he had a voice you couldn't mistake. When he walked into a room you knew this was someone special. His reach was international. At the same time he signed the document to end the death penalty, the Pope had the Coliseum illuminated to honor it. To know George Ryan was a privilege. To be a genuine friend even moreso. It was not only to respect him, but to like and love him. He was one of a kind

David M. Jaffe - May 05, 2025 at 02:36 PM

BF

“ *Brenda Frooninckx lit a candle in memory of George H Ryan Sr.*



Brenda Frooninckx - May 05, 2025 at 02:28 PM

SM

“ *George and Lura lynn were a model of loving parents for Joan and me and our six children, who even got the benefit of George in full Santa Klaus regalia and bells at our door on Christmas eve one year. Their love was inspirational. Our family hold the whole Ryan clan in our prayers as they grieve this loss.*

Joan and Steve Hermes

Stephen Hermes MD - May 05, 2025 at 12:55 PM

DJ

I had the privilege of seeing and having dinner with George in the last month in Ft. Myers. He was a powerful political leader but also a friend you'd have to work hard to lose. He never learned to whisper, as he had a voice you couldn't mistake. When he walked into a room you knew this was someone special. His reach was international. At the same time he signed the document to ether the death penalty, the Pope had the Coliseum illuminated to honor it. To know George Ryan was a privilege. To be a genuine friend even moreso. It was not only to respect him, but to like and love him. He was one of a kind

David M. Jaffe - May 05, 2025 at 02:28 PM

TD

“ *My heart felt condolences to the Ryan family. George Ryan was a good man and a great Governor. I'm proud to claim him as one of Kankakee's own. May his memory be a blessing.*

Tom Dandelles - May 05, 2025 at 11:36 AM

TH

“ I met Governor George Ryan in the fall of 20003 while at a meeting in Chicago at the Conrad Hilton. The meeting was the US Conference of Mayors/National League of Cities and George was the featured speaker. He looked like my "boss" Mayor Earl Carter of Peoria Heights, IL. I was the Village Administrator. Governor Ryan gave a great speech and I found him to be a gracious man. May he rest in peace.

Thomas John Horstmann - May 05, 2025 at 09:11 AM

JS

“ My thoughts and prayers are with the Ryan family. I have many great memories going to school with the middle 4 girls.
John Stukenborg

John M Stukenborg - May 05, 2025 at 08:59 AM

MP

“ My condolences to the family. I had the privilege of helping George write his memoir. His legacy will live forever. May the family be uplifted and comforted by the many, many fond memories of George. I am sad to lose my friend.
Maurice Possley

Maurice Possley - May 05, 2025 at 05:39 AM

JJ

“ No kinder couple than George and Lara Lynn. As a young legislative aide, they went out of their way NUMEROUS times to make me feel welcomed, included and valued. Whether it was Lara Lynn quietly joining me in the pew at Hazel Watson's funeral or the Governor inviting my stepdaughter to join them behind the grandstands prior to his inauguration as Governor. Always warm and gracious when they didn't need to be. Our interactions nearly always ended with them asking me to keep an eye on George while at EIU, a task I would never accept, BTW! Thoughts and prayers are with all who loved them. He was a great man and I'm blessed to have known him.

Jackie Clapp Joines - May 04, 2025 at 10:43 PM

MK

“ My deepest condolence to the family. I feel like I lost a good friend. George was the one that inspired me to create The Royal Order of Mushrooms in Springfield. George had good sense of humor and enjoyed a good laugh.

Myron J. Kulas

Myron Kulas - May 04, 2025 at 08:33 PM

SR

“ To the family with my deepest sympathy at this difficult moment. I will keep all of you in my prayers 🙏🙏🙏🙏

Sherrie REED - May 04, 2025 at 08:04 PM

DH

“ *Diane Hurrelbrink lit a candle in memory of George H Ryan Sr.*



Diane Hurrelbrink - May 04, 2025 at 03:38 PM

MS

“ *Will miss stopping in Sugar Shack and visiting talking politics while smoking a cigar. Governor shared some great insight and was more of a common sense politician rather than a party guy. Rest in Peace Gov!! 🥺🙏🙏*

Mike Summitt - May 04, 2025 at 02:43 PM

CC

“ *RIP Governor Ryan. Heartfelt condolences to his family*



Carol Carnahan - May 04, 2025 at 01:08 PM

GB

“ *Gloria Bydalek lit a candle in memory of George H Ryan Sr.*



Gloria Bydalek - May 04, 2025 at 01:05 PM

GB

Like to express my sorrow and sympathy to the entire family. He was a Wonderful man and put everything he had into his work. He did so much for others he will be sorely miss by everyone. My sister Betty Plante who talked with him a few times also sends her sympathy.

Gloria Bydalek - May 04, 2025 at 01:08 PM



“ *We were so saddened to hear of Gov. Ryan's passing. My husband, Gary Gauger, and I will forever be grateful for all the Gov. Ryan did to abolish the death penalty in Illinois and his support for the wrongfully convicted men and women in Illinois. We had the great opportunity to spend time with Gov. Ryan and Mrs. Ryan at a film screening at the SunDance Film Festival a few years ago. Both were so kind. He has a special place in our hearts and history.*
Sue Rekenhaller/Gary Gauger

Theresa Rekenhaller - May 04, 2025 at 11:36 AM

TM

“ *Tom Mallaney lit a candle in memory of George H Ryan Sr.*



Tom Mallaney - May 04, 2025 at 10:54 AM

HP

“ *My parents were close friends and we grew up with the Ryan's. I always admired both George and Lara Lynn. They were a part of my childhood and adulthood. It's hard to see them all leave us but they lived a full life and so am grateful for being a small part of their journey. Condolences to the family.*

Heather Parkhurst - May 04, 2025 at 07:33 AM

CS

“ Carla Scheppler lit a candle in memory of George H Ryan Sr.



Carla Scheppler - May 04, 2025 at 01:27 AM

MB

“ Gov. George Ryan died today! Here’s my story..he was 91 I am in my 70’s...I grew up in Kankakee County, Bonfield, IL., but went to St.Pat’s Church, in Kankakee! If my brothers and I behaved at 11:15 Mass, where my dad was the usher, we got to stop at Ryan’s Drug Store, on Court St. in Kankakee for treats, Tom Ryan was dad, pharmacist, and owner and we got to sit at the counter and have chocolate milk and get a candy bar to take home! George, the son, worked for his dad! He thought I was pretty cute as a 3 or 4 yr.old, I guess, and would “wash” the chocolate off my face when I was done! He eventually moved on and when my fiancée and I got engaged in a beautiful restaurant in Rockford, IL., George Ryan was having a political dinner with a friend! When our engagement was announced, he said to his dinner friend, “there can ONLY be ONE MaryPat Taylor”....he bought us a bottle of champagne, hugged me, and wished us a WONDERFUL married life! RIP George Ryan! 💔
🙏❤️

MaryPat Barney - May 03, 2025 at 11:10 PM

BB

Mary Pat, this is a beautiful memory that continues to bring joy to you and your husband.

George was a patient at the Veterans Clinic in Kankakee. Our friend is a Veteran as well as an RN there.

He was blessed with a Service Dog. His name is Grover and he is a Great Pyrenees and Poodle mix.

Grover is always by his side and makes patient visits with him. Grover rests while the patient is being examined. When that is completed the RN asks the patient if he would like to see Grover. The answer is YES!. Grover greets the patient with a happy demeanor and a wagging tail. He gives unconditional love and happiness.

George and his family were impressed with Grover and they wanted to help the VIP Service Dog organization.

His daughter Nancy became a Puppy Raiser for the organization and currently has an English Lab.

George came to class to watch how the puppies are trained to become Service Dogs.

Their puppy is loved by everyone in the family and others.

George was a good man and had a kind heart.

He will be missed.

Barb Bolek - May 04, 2025 at 11:19 AM

MB



MaryPat Barney - May 05, 2025 at 12:05 PM



“ *Bob and I will forever miss George.
Here is a picture from 15 years ago, my granddaughter’s little hand
and his.
Then, the trip to New York City, a few days after
911.
I send our sincere condolences.
Amy Newtson*



Amy Seely Newtson - May 03, 2025 at 08:37 PM

MW

“ *My Condolences to the family. Sending
Prayers. I met Mr. Ryan through his sister
Mrs.Katie Dean, who I had the pleasure of
working with at Illinois Veterans Home
Manteno. May he RIP.*



Ms. Cheryl Wilson - May 03, 2025 at 07:30 PM

CT

“ This was in 1991. I was 10 years old and would write letters occasionally to George as I was very interested in government. I asked George to come to my school in a letter right before I started 5th grade. I found out later on, he actually gave up meeting President Bush in Chicago as he said “he had a very important prior engagement that he couldn’t break” George was my friend, a true influence, and a man of true decency and integrity. I will miss him.



Chad Taylor - May 03, 2025 at 05:52 PM

MM

“ To the Ryan family; may Heaven’s peace and comfort be yours. Your parents were a gift to this community; thank you for sharing them with us.



Michael & Rita Morris - May 03, 2025 at 03:26 PM

KS

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Kris Swanson - May 03, 2025 at 02:38 PM

PL

“ *My you rest peacefully.*



Paul and Anton Leach - May 03, 2025 at 01:31 PM

RJ

“ *Governor Ryan and my father, Senator Ron Swanson, were great friends since the early 70's when George was the Speaker of the Illinois House and my dad in the Senate. They remained great friends through the years George was Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, and Governor. Governor Ryan was personally good to me, and I know of scores of folks that Governor Ryan helped and was a good friend to. The Swanson Family sends their sincere condolences to the Ryan Family, and hopes the best going forward... Sincerely, Ron Swanson, Jr.*

Ron Swanson, Jr. - May 03, 2025 at 01:29 PM



“ *My deepest condolences to his family. May his memory be a blessing.*



Bob Schneider - May 03, 2025 at 01:02 PM