
FORMER GOVERNORS OF ILLINOIS



Shadrach Bond (D-R*) — 1818-1822

Illinois' first Governor was born in Maryland and moved to the Northwest Territory in 1794 in present-day Monroe County. Bond helped organize the Illinois Territory in 1809, represented Illinois in Congress and was elected Governor without opposition in 1818. He was an advocate for a canal connecting Lake Michigan and the Illinois River, as well as for state education. A year after Bond became Governor, the state capital moved from Kaskaskia to Vandalia. The first Illinois Constitution prohibited a Governor from serving two terms, so Bond did not seek reelection. Bond County was named in his honor. He is buried in Chester. (1773-1832)

Edward Coles (D-R*) — 1822-1826

The second Illinois Governor was born in Virginia and attended William and Mary College. Coles inherited a large plantation with slaves but did not support slavery so he moved to a free state. He served as private secretary under President Madison for six years, during which he worked with Thomas Jefferson to promote the emancipation of slaves. He settled in Edwardsville in 1818, where he helped free the slaves in the area. As Governor, Coles advocated the Illinois-Michigan Canal, prohibition of slavery and reorganization of the state's judiciary. Coles County was named in his honor. He is buried in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. (1786-1868)



Ninian Edwards (D-R*) — 1826-1830

Before becoming Governor, Edwards was appointed the first Governor of the Illinois Territory by President Madison, serving from 1809 to 1818. Born in Maryland, he attended college in Pennsylvania, where he studied law, and then served in a variety of judgeships in Kentucky. He was elected one of Illinois' first two U.S. Senators in 1818. As Governor, Edwards advocated the removal of Native Americans from the state. He also sought growth in the state, and within the first two years of his term, Illinois' population tripled. He is buried in Springfield. (1775-1833)

John Reynolds (D) — 1830-1834

Born in Pennsylvania to Irish immigrants, Reynolds' family moved to Tennessee, when he was an infant, and then settled in Kaskaskia. He studied law at the College of Tennessee at Knoxville and practiced law in Cahokia. He served in the War of 1812, was a justice on the Illinois Supreme Court and served in the Illinois House for four years. A proponent of slavery, Reynolds narrowly won the governorship in 1830. The Black Hawk War overshadowed much of his term, and he resigned in 1834 to serve in the U.S. House. He is buried in Belleville. (1788-1865)



* Democratic-Republican, the major political party of the time.

William L.D. Ewing (D) — 1834

Ewing became Governor upon the resignation of Gov. Reynolds and Lt. Gov. Casey, serving only 15 days. Born near Nashville, Tennessee, he moved to Shawneetown in 1818 to practice law. He served as Receiver of Public Monies and was a colonel during the Black Hawk War. He served in the Illinois House and as Speaker in 1830, served in the state Senate from 1832 to 1834 and was acting Lieutenant Governor in 1833. Following his brief governorship, he served in the U.S. Senate for two years and again in the Illinois House. He is buried in Springfield. (1795-1846)



Joseph Duncan (D) — 1834-1838



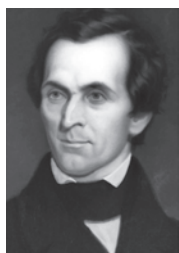
Originally from Kentucky, Duncan viewed slavery as “a great moral and political evil.” After retiring from the Army, he moved to Illinois near Kaskaskia and served as justice of the peace for Jackson County. He was commissioned a major general in the Illinois militia, served as a state Senator and was elected Illinois’ only representative in Congress in 1826, serving three terms. As Governor, Duncan pushed for state schools with little public support; however, two private higher learning institutions were opened during his term. He ran unsuccessfully for Governor again in 1842. He is buried in Jacksonville. (1794-1844)

Thomas Carlin (D) — 1838-1842

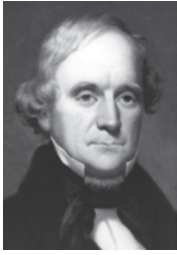
Born in Kentucky, Carlin fought in the War of 1812 and commanded a battalion during the Black Hawk War soon after moving to the Illinois Territory. He served in the House of Representatives and two terms in the state Senate and was appointed Receiver of Public Monies at Quincy in 1834. As Governor, Carlin pushed for a better state transportation system, which resulted in opening the Sangamon and Morgan Railroad, and for a \$4 billion loan supporting construction of the Illinois-Michigan Canal. He is buried in Carrollton. (1789-1852)



Thomas Ford (D) — 1842-1846



Born in Pennsylvania, Ford moved to the Midwest as a youth and studied law at Transylvania University in Kentucky. He practiced law in Waterloo and then moved to Edwardsville, where he was appointed state’s attorney. He served in the Black Hawk War and was a Circuit Court judge and state Supreme Court judge before becoming Governor. During his term, he reduced the state’s debt and instituted tolls along the Illinois-Michigan Canal. After his governorship, he authored *History of Illinois, From its Commencement as a State in 1818 to 1847*. He is buried in Peoria. (1800-1850)



Augustus C. French (D) — 1846-1853

Born in New Hampshire, French attended Dartmouth College and later studied law. He practiced law in Edgar and Edwards counties, served two years in the state Legislature and was Receiver of Public Monies at Palestine before becoming Governor. During his first term, he kept the state budget solvent and saw the Mormons leave Illinois after their city charter at Nauvoo was revoked. The Illinois-Michigan Canal also was completed. A new Illinois Constitution allowed him to seek a second term, during which he liquidated the state's debt. He is buried in

Lebanon. (1808-1864)

Joel Aldrich Matteson (D) — 1853-1857

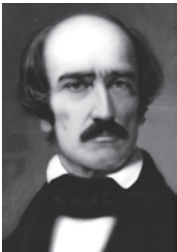
The 10th Governor of Illinois was a native of New York. In 1834, Matteson worked as a foreman on the first railroad in South Carolina. He moved to Joliet in 1836, where he helped secure a contract for the Illinois-Michigan Canal. As Governor, he oversaw the railroad-building boom, resulting in completion of several major railroads across the state. A proponent of education, he created a new Office of Public Instruction to help expand state-supported education. He also served as president of the Chicago and Alton Railroad. He is buried in Joliet. (1808-1873)



William H. Bissell (R) — 1857-1860

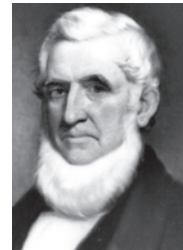
A native of New York, Bissell attended Cooperstown Academy and graduated from Jefferson Medical College and Transylvania University Law School in Kentucky. He practiced medicine in New York and then moved to Waterloo in 1837, where he taught school. He served in the state Legislature, served in the Mexican War and was elected three times to Congress as an independent Democrat who opposed slavery. Bissell was elected Governor under the new Republican Party. During his term, a northern penitentiary and institutions for the mentally ill

were appropriated. He died in office and is buried in Springfield. (1811-1860)



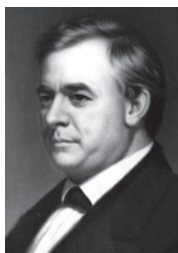
John Wood (R) — 1860-1861

As Lieutenant Governor, Wood assumed the governorship in 1860 upon Gov. Bissell's death. A native of New York, he moved to Shawneetown in 1819 and later to Pike County, where he was involved in anti-slavery efforts, and then served in the Black Hawk War. Wood petitioned the Legislature to create Adams County and retain Quincy as the county seat, where he served as mayor. He served in the state Senate before being elected Lieutenant Governor in 1856. After completing Bissell's term, he served as a top-ranking military official during the Civil War. He is buried in Quincy. (1798-1880)



Richard Yates (R) — 1861-1865

Yates was born in Kentucky and moved to Sangamon County in 1831. He attended Miami University in Ohio and Georgetown College in Kentucky and graduated in the first class of Illinois College in Jacksonville. He studied law at Transylvania University in Kentucky, practiced law in Jacksonville and began his public career in 1842 in the state Legislature. He also served four years in the U.S. House. During his gubernatorial race, Yates established loyalty to President Abraham Lincoln and the Union cause. As Governor, he sent more than double the state's quota of volunteers for the Civil War. He is buried in Jacksonville. (1818-1873)

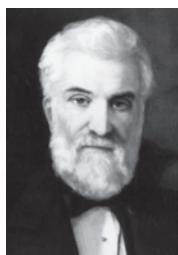


Richard J. Oglesby (R) — 1865-69; 1873; 1885-89

Oglesby served an unprecedented three times in office. Born in Kentucky, he served in the Mexican War and graduated from law school in Kentucky. He served briefly in the state Senate before being called to serve in the Civil War. During his first term as Governor, Oglesby established the State Board of Equalization and built new state institutions. After returning to private practice for a few years, he was elected again, serving just a few months before being elected to the U.S. Senate. He was elected to his last term 20 years after being elected to his first, during which he spearheaded changes to the state's election process. He is buried in Elkhart. (1824-1899)

John M. Palmer (R) — 1869-1873

Palmer was born in Kentucky and his family moved to Illinois because of strong anti-slavery principles. He attended law school in Alton and practiced law in Carlinville. He was a probate judge in Macoupin County and helped reframe a new Illinois Constitution. He served in the state Senate and presided over the first state Republican Convention, later serving as a delegate to the national convention. He also served in the Civil War. As Governor, Palmer provided relief for victims of the Great Chicago Fire. He switched parties during his term, and after his governorship, he served as a Democrat in the U.S. Senate. He is buried in Carlinville. (1817-1900)



John L. Beveridge (R) — 1873-1877

A New York native, Beveridge's family moved to DeKalb County in 1842. He studied law and taught school in Tennessee. He returned to DeKalb County to practice law and later moved to Evanston. After serving in the Civil War, he was elected sheriff of Cook County and then served two years in the Illinois House. He was elected Lieutenant Governor during Gov. Oglesby's second term and assumed the governorship when Oglesby was elected to the U.S. Senate. During his term, several charitable and reformatory institutions were funded, the state militia was increased and the state's debt was paid. He is buried in Chicago. (1824-1910)



Shelby Moore Cullom (R) — 1877-1883

Cullom's family moved from Kentucky to Tazewell County when he was a youth. He studied law and was elected city attorney of Springfield in 1855. He was a member of the Illinois House, serving as Speaker, served two terms in Congress and was engaged in banking. As Governor, Cullom established the Board of Fish Commissioners and allocated \$80,000 to pay for military suppression of riots in 1877. Halfway into his second term, he resigned to serve in the U.S. Senate, where he steered passage of a law creating an Interstate Commerce Commission. He is buried in Springfield. (1829-1914)

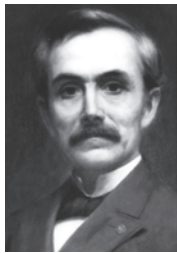
John M. Hamilton (R) — 1883-1885

Hamilton was born in Ohio, but during his childhood his family moved to Wenona in Marshall County. He served in the Civil War and taught school upon his return from duty. He graduated from Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington, studied law and then practiced law. He served in the state Senate four years and was elected Lieutenant Governor in 1880. When Gov. Cullom resigned during his second term, Hamilton assumed his duties. As Governor, he authorized the Compulsory Education Act for children ages 8-14 and supported an appropriation to complete the new State Capitol in Springfield. He is buried in Chicago. (1847-1905)



Joseph W. Fifer (R) — 1889-1893

Fifer was born in Virginia, and at age 17, he moved with his family to McLean County. After serving two years in the Civil War and sustaining severe injuries, he graduated from Illinois Wesleyan University, studied law and then practiced law in Bloomington. He served as the city's corporate counsel, as a state's attorney and in the state Senate. Fifer defeated former Gov. Palmer for the governorship in 1888. During his term, he supported measures to codify state public school laws and state consolidation of cities. He lost a reelection bid in 1893 to Democrat



John P. Altgeld. He is buried in Bloomington. (1840-1938)

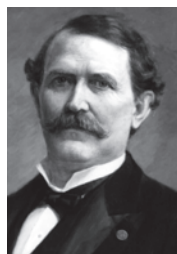
John P. Altgeld (D) — 1893-1897

An immigrant from Germany, Altgeld and his family settled in Ohio. After serving in the Civil War, he taught school and studied law in Missouri. He served as Missouri state's attorney and then moved to Chicago to practice law. Altgeld became the state's first Democratic Governor in 40 years. During his term, new business practices were instituted in state government, reformatory institutions were built, women were appointed for the first time to government positions, and the Illinois-Michigan Canal returned money to the state treasury for the first time in 20 years. He was defeated for a second term. He is buried in Chicago. (1847-1902)



John R. Tanner (R) — 1897-1901

Born in Indiana, Tanner served in the Civil War and then moved to Clay County, where he served as sheriff. He also served as clerk of the Circuit Court, state Senator, U.S. Marshall and State Treasurer. He helped reorganize the Republican Party, which led to Republican gains in both the Governor's office and the Legislature in 1896. During his term, coal strikes broke into violence in several cities and 10,000 Illinois troops were sent to the war effort against Spain. However, by the end of his term, the state debt was paid. Tanner did not seek reelection, and he died the following year. He is buried in Springfield. (1844-1901)



Richard Yates (R) — 1901-1905



Born in Jacksonville, Yates received his bachelor's and master's from Illinois College and graduated from the University of Michigan Law School. After serving as city attorney of Jacksonville and Morgan County judge, he was appointed a U.S. collector of internal revenue. Yates' nomination for Governor came on the 40th anniversary of his father's nomination for the same office. Yates ran a thrifty administration, vetoing bills for racetracks and improvements to the Executive Mansion. He was unsuccessful in re-nomination bids in 1904, 1908 and

1912, after which he served three terms in Congress. He is buried in Jacksonville. (1860-1936)

Charles S. Deneen (R) — 1905-1913

Illinois' 25th Governor was born in Edwardsville and graduated from McKendree College in Lebanon. He received his law degree from Union College of Law and practiced law in Chicago. He served in the state Legislature and as state's attorney of Cook County. As Governor, Deneen led passage of the first statewide primary law and the Presidential Preference Primary Law — the first in the nation. The state education budget also saw large increases, and workers' compensation provisions and child labor laws were implemented. He was defeated for a third term. He is buried in Chicago. (1863-1940)



Edward F. Dunne (D) — 1913-1917



A native of Connecticut, Dunne earned his law degree from Union College of Law and practiced law in Chicago. He served as a Circuit Court judge and as mayor of Chicago for two years. He defeated incumbent Gov. Deneen by more than 100,000 votes in 1912. During his term, Dunne pushed for better state roads and supported legislation to regulate public utilities. He was defeated for a second term by Republican Frank Lowden. After his governorship, he published a history of Illinois, *The Heart of the Nation*. He is buried in Evanston. (1853-1937)



Frank O. Lowden (R) — 1917-1921

Born in Minnesota, Lowden graduated from the University of Iowa and received his law degree from Union College of Law. After serving in the Spanish-American War, he ran unsuccessfully for Governor in 1904, served in Congress and then defeated incumbent Gov. Dunne in 1916. At the onset of World War I, Lowden pushed for a State Council of Defense, reorganized state agencies and reduced state taxes, producing a large state surplus. He produced a plan to finance highway construction through new car license fees and supported women's suffrage and anti-discrimination legislation. He is buried in Chicago. (1853-1937)

Lennington Small (R) — 1921-1929

A native of Kankakee, Small attended the Northern Indiana Normal School. He served in the state Senate, was a member of the State Treasury and served as an assistant treasurer of the U.S. Subtreasury. He was elected State Treasurer in 1917. As Governor, Small called for improvements to the state highway system, which spanned 7,000 miles by the time he left office. Early in his term, Small was charged with corruption while State Treasurer and fined \$650,000 in a civil suit. He ran unsuccessfully for a third term and again in 1936. Following his governorship, he published the *Daily Republican* newspaper. He is buried in Kankakee. (1862-1936)



Louis L. Emmerson (R) — 1929-1933

Born in Albion, Emmerson moved to Mount Vernon as a young man and later became president of The Third National Bank. He ran unsuccessfully for State Treasurer in 1912 but was elected Secretary of State for three terms, where he collected an unprecedented amount in automobile fees for highway construction. As Governor, Emmerson approved a gasoline tax to help fund highway construction and lobbied for federal aid to complete the Lakes-to-Gulf Waterway. Due to the impending Depression, he cut back spending and implemented relief measures for cities and the unemployed. He did not seek reelection. He is buried in Mt. Vernon. (1863-1941)



Henry Horner (D) — 1933-1940

Born in Chicago, Horner attended the University of Chicago and studied law at IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law. As judge of the Probate Court of Cook County, Horner streamlined court procedures and helped the underprivileged navigate the legal system. As Governor at the end of the Depression, Horner abolished the state real estate tax, instituted a 2% sales tax and consolidated farm debts. He also presided over formal ratification of the 21st Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which repealed prohibition. He became ill during his second term, and Lt. Gov. Stelle assumed his duties. He is buried in Winnetka. (1879-1940)



John H. Stelle (D) — 1940-1941

A native of McLeansboro, Stelle attended Western Military Academy in Alton and studied law at Washington University in St. Louis. He practiced law in his hometown, then enlisted in the Illinois National Guard and served in World War I until he was injured in battle. After several years working in business, he served as an assistant State Auditor, as State Treasurer and as Lieutenant Governor. Following his brief term as Governor, he returned to his business interests. He is buried in McLeansboro. (1891-1962)



Dwight H. Green (R) — 1941-1949



Born in Indiana, Green attended Wabash College before enlisting in the Air Force when World War I broke out. He attended Stanford University and received both his doctorate and law degrees from the University of Chicago. Green gained national recognition while prosecuting Al Capone and other gangsters, which led to his appointment as a U.S. district attorney. He lost a Chicago mayoral race in 1939. During his two terms as Governor, veterans' provisions were instituted, housing and unemployment issues were addressed, and a law was passed requiring U.S. history to be taught in all public schools. He is buried in Chicago. (1897-1958)

Adlai E. Stevenson II (D) — 1949-1953

Born in Los Angeles, Stevenson joined the U.S. Naval Reserves at age 18. He graduated from Princeton University and completed his law degree at Northwestern University while working weekends at the *Bloomington Daily Pantagraph*. A World War II veteran, he held several state and federal legal positions and served on the U.S. delegation to the newly created United Nations. As Governor, Stevenson sponsored mining law revisions and increased the gas tax to finance the highway system. Following his governorship, he ran unsuccessfully for President of the United States in 1952 and 1956. He is buried in Bloomington. (1900-1965)



William G. Stratton (R) — 1953-1961



Born in Ingleside, Stratton graduated from the University of Arizona and served in the Illinois National Guard. He was the youngest member of the U.S. House, served as State Treasurer and in 1945 joined the U.S. Navy. After serving in World War II, he again was elected to Congress and served another term as State Treasurer. As Governor, Stratton supported the financing of expressways and increased the state sales tax to support state universities. He was defeated for a third term and lost a gubernatorial primary bid in 1968. He is buried in Chicago. (1914-2001)



Otto Kerner (D) — 1961-1968

A Chicago native, Kerner graduated from Brown University and received his law degree from Northwestern University. He was a World War II veteran, achieving the rank of major general, and served as a U.S. district attorney and Cook County judge. As Governor, Kerner increased state sales and corporate taxes to pay for his unprecedented \$4 billion budget. He also signed consumer credit legislation and a new criminal code. He resigned in 1968 to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals. Six years later, he resigned from the court to serve prison time for bribery, conspiracy and tax evasion. He is buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia. (1908-1976)

Samuel H. Shapiro (D) — 1968-1969

Born in Kankakee, Shapiro attended St. Victor College and received his law degree from the University of Illinois. He practiced law in Kankakee and later was appointed city attorney and then state's attorney. Shapiro was elected Lieutenant Governor in 1960 under Gov. Kerner and reelected in 1964. When Kerner resigned in 1968, Shapiro assumed his duties. He was narrowly defeated for Governor in 1968 by Republican Richard Ogilvie. He is buried in Forest Park. (1907-1987)



Richard B. Ogilvie (R) — 1969-1973



A native of Kansas City, Missouri, Ogilvie served in the U.S. Army during World War II and was awarded a Purple Heart. He graduated from Yale University and studied law at IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law. He served as an assistant U.S. attorney, as a special assistant to the U.S. Attorney General and as Cook County sheriff. As Governor, Ogilvie streamlined state government and instituted a new state income tax law, which provided more funding for schools and police departments. His Lieutenant Governor was Paul Simon, a Democrat — the first and last time Illinois had a Governor and Lieutenant Governor of opposing parties. He is buried in Chicago. (1927-1988)

Daniel Walker (D) — 1973-1977

Born in Washington, D.C., Walker served in the U.S. Navy and graduated from Northwestern Law School. In 1968, he led an investigation of the Democratic National Convention riots and issued the *Walker Report*. He gained national attention walking the length of Illinois during his campaign for Governor. During his term, Walker cut the state's payroll and implemented energy-saving measures for state buildings. He lost the primary for a second term. Ten years later, he spent 18 months in prison for improprieties relating to his savings and loan business. He published his autobiography, *The Maverick and the Machine*, in 2007. (1922-2015)



James R. Thompson (R) — 1977-1991

A native Chicagoan, Thompson attended the University of Illinois and Washington University in St. Louis and graduated from Northwestern University School of Law. He served as an assistant attorney general and as a U.S. district attorney. During his unprecedented four terms as Governor, Thompson cut government spending and addressed the recession while continuing to provide vital state services. He initiated the Build Illinois infrastructure program, created the Project Chance welfare-to-work program and signed legislation to restructure the Chicago school system. In 2016, he retired as CEO of Winston & Strawn LLP in Chicago. He is buried in Chicago. (1936-2020)



Jim Edgar (R) — 1991-1999



Edgar was born in Oklahoma and grew up in Charleston. He earned his B.A. from Eastern Illinois University. He served in the Illinois House and was appointed Secretary of State in 1981, when Alan Dixon was elected to the U.S. Senate. During his tenure, he gained national recognition for his crackdown on drunk driving and pioneered an adult literacy program that became a model for the nation. As Governor, Edgar streamlined state government, championed welfare-to-work and education reforms, and supported infrastructure improvements. He did not seek a third term. He is a distinguished fellow at the U of I Institute of Government and Public Affairs. (1946-)

George H. Ryan (R) — 1999-2003

Born in Iowa and a lifelong resident of Kankakee, Ryan served in the U.S. Army in Korea and obtained his pharmacy degree from Ferris State College. He served in the Illinois House and as Speaker, was Lieutenant Governor under Gov. Thompson and was Secretary of State for two terms. As Governor, Ryan created the Illinois FIRST infrastructure program and the “15-20-LIFE” law, which created stiffer penalties for using a gun during a crime. He also gained national attention for his moratorium on executions in Illinois. He did not seek a second term. He was convicted on federal public corruption charges in 2006 and served five and a half years in prison. (1934-)



Rod Blagojevich (D) — 2003-2009



Blagojevich was born and raised in Chicago. He graduated from Northwestern University and earned his law degree from Pepperdine University. He served in both the Illinois and U.S. House of Representatives and was the first Democratic Governor to serve in 26 years. As Governor, he expanded access to health care and bolstered public safety. In December 2008, during his second term, he was arrested on federal corruption charges and, subsequently, impeached and removed from office in January 2009. He was convicted on public corruption charges in 2011 and sentenced to 14 years in prison. (1956-)



Patrick J. Quinn (D) — 2009-2015

Born and raised in Hinsdale, Quinn graduated from Georgetown University and Northwestern School of Law. He served as State Treasurer (1991-1995) and Lieutenant Governor (2003-2009) prior to his succession to Governor in 2009 after Gov. Blagojevich was impeached and removed from office. He was elected to a full term as Governor in 2010. As Governor, Quinn focused on restoring integrity to state government. He abolished the death penalty in Illinois, improved nursing home conditions and signed landmark legislation

legalizing same-sex marriage. He signed an executive order establishing the Illinois Reform Commission to examine ethics rules and practices in state government. Gov. Quinn also worked with the General Assembly to pass a \$31 billion capital construction initiative to support more than 439,000 jobs over six years. (1948-)

Bruce V. Rauner (R) — 2015-2019

Bruce Rauner grew up in Deerfield and graduated from Dartmouth College with a degree in economics. He attended Harvard University, where he earned his MBA. He ran for Governor with no previous political experience, which he believed would allow him to “Shake Up Springfield.” Under Rauner’s term, the state operated without a budget for 793 days. The longest budget impasse in Illinois history cost the state more than \$1 billion in late-payment penalties, and lawmakers from both sides of the aisle ultimately voted to override the Governor’s veto of another budget. Rauner was an advocate of term limits and increased financial support of early childhood and K-12 education by nearly \$1 billion. In 2017, Rauner moved the state to an evidence-based model of educational funding — prioritizing districts that are the furthest from being fully funded and taking into consideration each district’s individual needs. (1956-)



Sources: Illinois Blue Book; The Encyclopedia of Illinois, 1996-1997, a volume of the Encyclopedia of the United States; Who’s Who in the Midwest, 2005; Wikipedia online encyclopedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org>; Grave Sites of Illinois Governors, www.graveyards.com; Find a Grave, www.findagrave.com; Illinois Trails History and Genealogy Project, www.iltrails.org.