

Governor George H. Ryan

nga.org/cms/home/governors/past-governors-bios/page_illinois/col2-content/main-content-list/title_ryan_george.html

State Website

Office Dates: Jan 11, 1999 - Jan 13, 2003

Born: Feb 24, 1934

Birth State: Iowa

Party: Republican

Family: Married Lura Lynn Lowe; six children

School(s): Ferris State College



GEORGE H. RYAN was born in Maquoketa, Iowa. He earned a bachelor's degree in pharmacy from Ferris State College in 1961, and at one time owned a chain of family-run pharmacies. Ryan served as chairman of the Kankakee County Board and was elected five times to the Illinois House of Representatives, serving as speaker during the 1981-1983 legislative session. He served two terms as lieutenant governor and secretary of state before being elected governor in 1998. During his tenure in public office, he promoted organ and tissue donation awareness, adult literacy programs and the application of new information technologies. Governor Ryan was a strong advocate for the prevention of drunken-driving, and he successfully pushed for Illinois to lower the blood alcohol level to 0.08 percent. He launched a five-year, \$12 billion public works program, Illinois FIRST, to rebuild the state's infrastructure, roads, schools, and transportation systems. He dedicated 51 percent of all new revenue for schools, allocated \$2 billion for the VentureTECH program, and ordered a commission to rewrite the state's outdated criminal code. On January 31, 2000, Governor Ryan declared a moratorium on executions in Illinois until a commission can review the administration of the death penalty.