

Many deaths in 2025 had a wide impact

EDITOR'S NOTE — This story includes discussion of suicide. If you or someone you know needs help, the national suicide and crisis lifeline in the U.S. is available by calling or texting 988. There is also an online chat at 988lifeline.org. Helplines outside the U.S. can be found at www.iasp.info/suicid-althoughts.

By Bernard McGhee
The Associated Press

The death of Pope Francis brought change to the Catholic Church, which counts 1.4 billion adherents and is now led — for the first time — by

an American pope. The fatal shooting of conservative activist Charlie Kirk as he spoke before a crowd horrified many and prompted somber conversations about political violence.

And when trafficking victim Virginia Giuffre died by suicide, it brought additional scrutiny to the investigations of sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. They were among the noteworthy and influential people who died in 2025 where the deaths themselves had a widespread impact.

The deaths of Oscar-winning actor Gene Hackman

and his wife became a source of both sadness and mystery after their bodies were found in their home in February. Authorities ultimately determined that Hackman, who was in the advanced stages of Alzheimer's, died of heart disease, likely unaware that Betsy Arakawa had died from hantavirus a week earlier.

Meanwhile, the death of heavy metal icon Ozzy Osbourne, which came just weeks after his farewell concert, marked the end of an era in music. The year also saw the death of boxing great George Foreman, who mem-

orably lost a much-watched match to Muhammad Ali but whose career had inspiring second and third acts as a world champion and successful business owner.

And the world said goodbye this year to Dick Cheney, the hard-charging conservative whose long career in public service included becoming one of the most powerful vice presidents in U.S. history under President George W. Bush.

Here is a roll call of some influential figures who have died this year (cause of death cited, if available):



Associated Press file photo

Pope Francis leaves at the end of his weekly general audience in St. Peter's Square, at the Vatican, May 15, 2019.

JANUARY

■ **Wayne Osmond**, 73. The singer and guitarist was a founding member of The Osmonds, a million-album-selling family act known for such 1970s teen hits as "One Bad Apple," "Yo-Yo" and "Down By the Lazy River." Jan. 1.
■ **Peter Yarrow**, 86. The singer-songwriter was best known as one-third of Peter, Paul and Mary, the folk music trio whose impassioned harmonies transfixed millions as they lifted their voices in favor of civil rights and against war. Jan. 7.
■ **Nancy Leftenant-Colon**, 104. The first Black woman to join the U.S. Army Nurse Corps after the military was desegregated in the 1940s retired as a major and was remembered by relatives and friends for quietly breaking down racial barriers during her long military career. Jan. 8.
■ **Sam Moore**, 89. He was the higher voice of the 1960s duo Sam & Dave, known for such definitive hits of the era as "Soul Man" and "Hold On, I'm Comin'." Jan. 10.
■ **David Lynch**, 78. The filmmaker was celebrated for his uniquely dark and dreamlike vision in such movies as "Blue Velvet" and "Mulholland Drive," and the TV series "Twin Peaks." Jan. 16.



■ **Bob Uecker**, 90. He parlayed a forgettable playing career into a punch line for movie and TV appearances as "Mr. Baseball" and a Hall of Fame broadcasting tenure. Jan. 16.
■ **Joan Plowright**, 95. She was an award-winning British actor who, with her late husband Laurence Olivier, did much to revitalize the U.K.'s theatrical scene after World War II. Jan. 16.
■ **Dick Button**, 95. He was one of the most accomplished men's figure skaters in history, and one of his sport's great innovators and promoters. Jan. 30.

FEBRUARY

■ **Kultida Woods**, 80. Tiger Woods credited his Thai-born mother with instilling his dominant spirit and encouraging him to wear red shirts on Sundays as his power color. Feb. 4.
■ **Irv Gotti**, 54. A music mogul who founded Murder Inc. Records, he was behind major hip-hop and R&B artists such as Ashanti and Ja Rule. Feb. 5.
■ **Anne Marie Hochhalter**, 43. She lived in pain for 25 years after being partially paralyzed in

the Columbine High School shooting and her death of sepsis, related to her injuries, was ruled a homicide. Feb. 16.

■ **Gene Hackman**, 95. The Oscar-winning actor whose studied portraits ranged from reluctant heroes to conniving villains and made him one of the industry's most respected and honored performers. Feb. 18. Found dead with his wife Betsy Arakawa.

■ **Mabel Staton**, 92. The Black track and field standout broke through barriers as the only woman to compete for the United States in the long jump at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics. Feb. 20.

■ **Clint Hill**, 93. The Secret Service agent leaped onto the back of President John F. Kennedy's limousine after the president was shot, then was forced to retire early because he remained haunted by memories of the assassination. Feb. 21.

■ **Roberta Flack**, 88. The Grammy-winning singer and pianist's intimate vocal and musical style made her one of the top recording artists of the 1970s and an influential performer long after that. Feb. 24.

■ **Michelle Trachtenberg**, 39. A former child star in the hit 1996 movie "Harriet the Spy," she went on to co-star in two buzzy millennial-era TV shows — "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" and "Gossip Girl." The cause and manner of her death were officially listed as undetermined. Feb. 26.

■ **Boris Spassky**, 88. A Soviet-era world chess champion, he lost his title to American Bobby Fischer in a legendary 1972 match that became a proxy for Cold War rivalries. Feb. 27.

MARCH

■ **Lincoln Di-az-Balart**, 70. He was a Cuban American who opposed his uncle Fidel Castro and spent 18 years in the U.S. House of Representatives as a member of a politically powerful South Florida family. March 3.
■ **Carl Dean**, 82. Dolly Parton's devoted husband of nearly 60 years avoided the spotlight and inspired her timeless hit "Jolene." March 3.



■ **George Foreman**, 76. The fearsome heavyweight boxer lost the "Rumble in the Jungle" to Muhammad Ali before his inspiring second and third acts as a 45-year-old world champion and a successful business

owner. March 21.

■ **Kitty Dukakis**, 88. The wife of former Massachusetts governor and Democratic presidential candidate Michael Dukakis spoke openly about her struggles with depression and addiction. March 21.

■ **Mia Love**, 49. A daughter of Haitian immigrants, the first Black Republican woman elected to Congress died of brain cancer. March 23.

■ **David Childs**, 83. He was the lead architect of the One World Trade Center skyscraper that rose from the site where the twin towers collapsed in New York City during the 9/11 attacks. March 26.
■ **Richard Chamberlain**, 90. The handsome hero of the 1960s television series "Dr. Kildare" came out as gay four decades later and was known as the "king of the miniseries" for his roles in "The Thorn Birds" and "Shogun." March 29.

APRIL



■ **Val Kilmer**, 65. The brooding, versatile actor who played fan favorite Iceman in "Top Gun," donned a voluminous cape as Batman in "Batman Forever" and portrayed Jim Morrison in "The Doors," died of pneumonia. April 1.

■ **Jay North**, 73. He starred as the towheaded mischievous maker on TV's "Dennis the Menace" for four seasons starting in 1959. April 6.

■ **Octavio Dotel**, 51. He pitched for 13 major league teams in a 15-year career and won a World Series with the St. Louis Cardinals, and died in the same roof collapse in the Dominican Republic. April 8.

■ **Wink Martindale**, 91. The genial host of such hit game shows as "Gambit" and "Tic-Tac-Dough" also did one of the first recorded television interviews with a young Elvis Presley. April 15.

■ **Pope Francis**, 88. History's first Latin American pontiff charmed the world with his humble style and concern for poor people but alienated conservatives with critiques of capitalism and climate change. April 21.

■ **Steve McMichael**, 67. A star defensive tackle on the Chicago Bears' 1985 Super Bowl championship team whose larger-than-life personality later made him a natural for professional wrestling as "Ming the Merciless," he died after battling ALS. April 23.



■ **Virginia Giuffre**, 41. She accused Britain's Prince Andrew and other influential men of sexually exploiting her as a teenager trafficked by financier Jeffrey Epstein. An advocate for sex trafficking survivors after emerging as a central figure in Epstein's downfall, she died by suicide according to her publicist. April 25.

■ **Dick Barnett**, 88. A basketball Hall of Famer, he played on both New York Knicks NBA championship teams after being part of a historic college powerhouse at Tennessee A&I. April 27.

MAY

■ **David H. Souter**, 85. The retired Supreme Court justice was an ascetic bachelor and New Hampshire Republican who became a favorite of liberals during nearly 20 years on the bench. May 8.
■ **George Wendt**, 76. An actor with an everyman charm, he played the affable barfly Norm on the hit 1980s TV comedy "Cheers" and performed on Broadway in "Art," "Hairspray" and "Elf." May 20.

■ **Phil Robertson**, 79. The "Duck Dynasty" patriarch turned his small duck-calling interest in the sportsman's paradise of northern Louisiana into a big business and conservative cultural phenomenon. May 25.

■ **Bernard Kerik**, 69. He served as New York City's police commissioner on 9/11 and later pleaded guilty to tax fraud before being pardoned. May 29.

■ **Loretta Swit**, 87. She won two Emmy Awards playing Maj. Margaret Houlihan, the demanding head nurse of a Korean War surgical unit on the pioneering hit TV series "M.A.S.H." May 30.

JUNE

■ **Shigeo Nagashima**, 89. He was known in Japan as "Mr. Pro Baseball," one of the most famous people in the country during his playing days. June 3.
■ **Jim Marshall**, 87. The former Minnesota Vikings defensive end was one of four members of the famed Purple People Eaters, the backbone of four Super Bowl teams. June 3.

■ **Sly Stone**, 82. The revolutionary musician and dynamic showman led Sly and the Family Stone, transforming popular music in the 1960s and '70s and beyond with such hits as "Everyday People," "Stand!" and "Family Affair." June 9.
■ **Brian Wilson**, 82. The Beach Boys'

visionary and fragile leader whose genius for melody, arrangements and wide-eyed self-expression inspired "Good Vibrations," "California Girls" and other summertime anthems, becoming one of the world's most influential recording artists. June 11.



■ **Ananda Lewis**, 52. The former MTV and BET host who became a beloved television personality in the 1990s with her warmth and authenticity died of breast cancer. June 11.
■ **D. Wayne Lukas**, 89. The Hall of Famer became one of horse racing's most accomplished trainers and a face of the sport for decades. June 28.

JULY

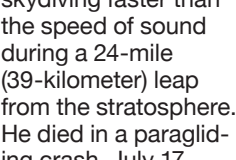
■ **Jimmy Swaggart**, 90. The televangelist amassed an enormous following and multimillion-dollar ministry, only to be undone by his penchant for prostitutes. July 1.

■ **Alex Delvecchio**, 93. A member of the Hockey Hall of Fame, he helped the Detroit Red Wings win the Stanley Cup three times in the 1950s. July 1.

■ **Michael Madsen**, 67. The actor best known for his coolly menacing, steely-eyed, often sadistic characters in the films of Quentin Tarantino, including "Reservoir Dogs" and "Kill Bill: Vol. 2." July 3.

■ **Felix Baumgartner**, 56. The extreme athlete stunned the world in 2012 by skydiving faster than the speed of sound during a 24-mile (39-kilometer) leap from the stratosphere. He died in a paragliding crash. July 17.

■ **Malcolm-Jamal Warner**, 54. His 40-year career as an actor and director began as teenage son Theo Huxtable on "The Cosby Show," a cultural phenomenon that helped define the 1980s. He drowned in the Caribbean Sea. July 20.



■ **Ozzy Osbourne**, 76. The gloomy, demon-invoking lead singer of the pioneering band Black Sabbath became the godfather of heavy metal and then a doddering dad on reality TV. July 22.

■ **Chuck Mangione**, 84. The two-time Grammy Award-winning musician achieved international success in 1977 with his jazz-flavored single "Feels So Good" and later became a voice actor on the animated TV comedy

"King of the Hill." July 22.

■ **Hulk Hogan**, 71. The mustachioed, headscarf-wearing, bicep-busting icon of professional wrestling turned the sport into a massive business and stretched his influence into TV, pop culture and conservative politics during a long and scandal-plagued second act. July 24.

■ **Ryne Sandberg**, 65. The Hall of Fame second baseman became one of baseball's best all-around players while starring for the Chicago Cubs. July 28.

AUGUST

■ **Loni Anderson**, 79. She played a struggling radio station's empowered receptionist on the hit TV comedy "WKRP in Cincinnati." Aug. 3.

■ **James Lovell**, 97. The commander of Apollo 13 helped turn a failed moon mission into a triumph of on-the-fly can-do engineering. Aug. 7.

■ **Terence Stamp**, 87. The British actor often played the role of a complex villain, including that of General Zod in the early Superman films. Aug. 17.

■ **Humpty Wheeler**, 86. He was a pioneering motorsports promoter as president and general manager of Charlotte Motor Speedway. Aug. 20.

■ **Ron Turcotte**, 84. The Hall of Fame jockey rode Secretariat to the Triple Crown in 1973. Aug. 22.

SEPTEMBER

■ **Graham Greene**, 73. A trailblazing Indigenous actor, his long career included an Oscar nomination for his portrayal of Kicking Bird in "Dances with Wolves." Sept. 1.

■ **Giorgio Armani**, 91. The iconic Italian designer turned the concept of understated elegance into a multibillion-dollar fashion empire. Sept. 4.

■ **Joseph McNeil**, 83. He was one of four North Carolina college students whose refusal to leave a racially segregated Woolworth's lunch counter 65 years ago helped spark nonviolent civil rights sit-ins across the South. Sept. 4.

■ **The Duchess of Kent**, 92. Born Katharine Lucy Mary Worsley, she famously broke royal protocol to hug a Wimbledon runner-up and stepped away from family duties to teach music in a public school. Sept. 4.



■ **Charlie Kirk**, 31. Rising from a teenage conservative campus activist to a top podcaster and ally of President Donald Trump, he was fatally shot during

an appearance at a college in Utah. Sept. 10.

■ **Ricky Hatton**, 46. The former boxing world champion who rose to become one of the most popular fighters in the sport had mental health struggles and was found dead due to hanging. Sept. 14.

■ **Robert Redford**, 89. The Hollywood golden boy became an Oscar-winning director, liberal activist and godfather for independent cinema under the name of one of his best-loved characters. Sept. 16.

■ **Sonny Curtis**, 88. A vintage rock 'n' roller, he wrote the raw classic "I Fought the Law" and posed the enduring question "Who can turn the world on with her smile?" as the writer-crooner of the theme song to "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." Sept. 19.

■ **Sara Jane Moore**, 95. She was imprisoned for more than 30 years after she made an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate President Gerald Ford in 1975. Sept. 24.

OCTOBER



■ **Jane Goodall**, 91. The conservationist was renowned for her groundbreaking chimpanzee field research and globe-spanning environmental advocacy. Oct. 1.

■ **Joan B. Kennedy**, 89. The former wife of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy endured family tragedies, her husband's infidelities and decades-long struggles with alcoholism and mental health. Oct. 8.

■ **Diane Keaton**, 79. The Oscar-winning star's quirky manner and emotional depth enthralled fans in movies including "Annie Hall," "The Godfather" films and "Father of the Bride." Oct. 11.

■ **Ace Frehley**, 74. The original lead guitarist and founding member of the glam-rock band Kiss captivated audiences with his elaborate galactic makeup and smoking guitar. Oct. 16.

■ **Susan Stamborg**, 87. The "founding mother" of National Public Radio was the first female broadcaster to host a national news program. Oct. 16.

■ **Daniel Naroditsky**, 29. The chess grandmaster who started as a child prodigy quickly became one of the most influential American voices in the sport. His cause of death was not made public. Oct. 20.

■ **June Lockhart**, 100. She became a mother figure for a generation of television viewers, whether at home in "Lassie" or "Lost in Space." Oct. 23.

■ **Nick Mangold**, 41. As a New York Jets center he was one of the franchise's greatest players, twice helping lead the team to the AFC championship game. He died of complications of kidney disease. Oct. 25.

NOVEMBER

■ **Martha Layne Collins**, 88. She was the first and only woman elected governor of Kentucky. Nov. 1.



■ **Dick Cheney**, 84. The hard-charging conservative was a leading advocate for invading Iraq as one of the most powerful and polarizing vice presidents in U.S. history. Years later, he became a critic and target of President Donald Trump. Nov. 3.

■ **Paul Tagliabue**, 84. He helped bring labor peace and riches to the NFL during his 17 years as commissioner but was criticized for not taking stronger action on concussions. Nov. 9.

■ **Viola Ford Fletcher**, 111. As one of the last survivors of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre in Oklahoma, she spent her later years seeking justice for the deadly attack by a white mob on the thriving Black community where she lived as a child. Nov. 24.

■ **Fuzzy Zoeller**, 74. One of golf's most gregarious characters, the two-time major champion's career was tainted by a racially insensitive joke about Tiger Woods. Nov. 27.

DECEMBER

■ **Rod Paige**, 92. The educator, coach and administrator rolled out the nation's landmark No Child Left Behind law as the first African American to serve as U.S. education secretary. Dec. 9.

■ **Sophie Kinsella**, 55, author of the millions-selling 'Shopaholic' novels. Dec. 10.

■ **Anthony Geary**, 78, played Luke Spencer on the long-running soap opera "General Hospital." Dec. 14.

■ **Rob Reiner**, 78. The son of a comedy giant who became one himself as one of the preeminent filmmakers of his generation with movies such as "The Princess Bride," "When Harry Met Sally ..." and "This Is Spinal Tap," he was fatally stabbed along with his wife Michele Singer Reiner in their home. Dec. 14.

■ **Greg Biffle**, 55. Picked by NASCAR as one of its top 75 drivers in history, the Hall of Fame nominee was killed in a small jet crash. Dec. 18.