

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. Help lines outside the U.S. can be found at www.iasp.info/suicide-almosts.

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):

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 Diaz-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.

■ **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.

■ **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 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.

■ **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.

■ **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 Naganohara**, 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.

■ **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.

■ **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.

■ **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 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.

■ **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 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.

■ **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.

</div