



**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF COOK COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

Cook County Building, Board Room, 118 North Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois

New Items Agenda

Thursday, December 19, 2019, 10:00 AM

Fourth Set

[20-0760](#)

Sponsored by: TONI PRECKWINKLE (President), Cook County Board of Commissioners

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

HONORING REV. CLAY EVANS

WHEREAS, Rev. Clay Evans, legendary gospel singer, choirmaster and celebrated Baptist minister who became a fast ally to the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in his effort to expose the slum conditions black Chicago residents endured has died; and

WHEREAS, Evans linked King to other ministers interested in his Operation Breadbasket program, which sought to improve conditions for blacks and open jobs at all-white supermarket chains and bottling companies. "I try to embody the principles of Christianity, and for me that means being dedicated to freedom and equality," Evans told a Tribune reporter in 1974; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee-born cleric gained national notoriety for his rousing sermons, and energetic storytelling style and performed on television with his choirs, and for helping to introduce black gospel music to the mainstream; and

WHEREAS, gifted with a recognizable husky baritone that could have just as easily fronted a big jazz band, he performed as a soloist on songs such as "I'm Going Through." He also performed with his Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church choir, known as The Ship, and later with the African American Religious Connection Mass Choir; and

WHEREAS, Evans produced dozens of gospel albums and helped popularize broadcast ministry in the 1970s with his "What a Fellowship" TV program. Evans' music program began airing on Channel 38 in 1977. "Music was a gift that he had, and he was committed to inspire ... and share the good news with people," said the Rev. Charles Jenkins, current pastor of Evans' Fellowship church, and

WHEREAS, ordained a Baptist minister in 1950, Evans was both a leader and behind-the-scenes player who helped launch the ministerial careers of many up-and-coming ministers who would make an impact, including the Rev. Jesse Jackson and the Rev. Consuella York, the first African American woman to be ordained into the clergy in Chicago by her denomination; and

WHEREAS, Evans' work with Jackson and King that set the stage for his work that blended ministry with community activism, particularly aimed at Chicago's political machine, which long excluded or ignored African American concerns. Some of the work done by Evans' community action forced white-owned companies to open jobs closed to African Americans. His work with Jackson, and later the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, was believed to have opened thousands of jobs for black workers, according to the King Research and Education Institute at Stanford University, and

WHEREAS, Evans' support for King was integral in helping the famed Atlanta preacher get a foothold in Chicago, where he planned to launch his Chicago Freedom Movement to reveal the unfair conditions black residents suffered; and

WHEREAS, that early support for King, who famously launched the Montgomery bus boycott, came at a cost, as some bitterly opposed King for being an outsider or a threat to their white political support, according to Zach Mills' 2018 book, "The Last Blues Preacher: Reverend Clay Evans, Black Lives, and the Faith That Woke the Nation", and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the President and the Cook County Board of Commissioners, on behalf of the residents of Cook County, honor Rev. Clay Evans and praise his essential contribution to the health and viability of Cook County.

[20-0767](#)

Sponsored by: BRANDON JOHNSON, Cook County Board of Commissioners

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

SUPPORT RENAMING THE OAK PARK AVENUE CHICAGO TRANSIT AUTHORITY BLUE LINE STOP TO OAK PARK CONSERVATORY STOP

WHEREAS, the residents of Cook County have been visiting the Oak Park Conservatory since 1929, and

WHEREAS, this stunning glass structure provides a welcomed oasis for residents and tourists to enjoy a bit of the Mediterranean, Tropics and Desert all under one roof, and

WHEREAS, The Oak Park Conservatory is owned and operated by the Park District of Oak Park, and

WHEREAS, Park District of Oak Park provides this treasure free of charge to all who visit, and

WHEREAS, the Oak Park Conservatory is located in the 1st District, and

WHEREAS, the mission of The Friends of the Oak Park Conservatory (FOPCON), a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit, is to promote the Oak Park Conservatory, and

WHEREAS, since its inception, FOPCON has raised over \$1 million to help make necessary improvements to the Conservatory and has provided thousands of volunteer hours to provide educational programming for children and adults, through School Tours, Exploration Station, Toddler Exploration, Docent Guided Tours and more, and

WHEREAS, the Oak Park Conservatory is visited by more than 50,000 guests each year, and

WHEREAS, the Cook County Board of Commissioners is always looking for ways to promote wonderful

community assets like the Oak Park Conservatory, and

WHEREAS, the Park District of Oak Park approved a Resolution seeking to rename the Oak Park stop on the Blue Line to the “Oak Park Conservatory” stop; and

WHEREAS, this renaming will highlight the Oak Park Conservatory much the way the Conservatory - Central Park Drive stop on the Green Line highlighted the Garfield Park Conservatory several years ago,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT we, the President and Members of the Cook County Board of Commissioners fully supports the Park District of Oak Park’s request to rename the Oak Park Avenue stop on the Blue Line to “Oak Park Conservatory” stop.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT a suitable copy of this resolution be delivered to the Chicago Transit Board and to the Park District of Oak Park.