



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

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

Consent Agenda

Thursday, April 27, 2023, 10:00 AM

Third Set

[23-2725](#)

Sponsored by: DENNIS DEER, Cook County Board of Commissioners

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

RECOGNIZING ERNEST R. AND GLORIA J. JENKINS FOR THEIR LIFE AND LEGACY OF CHANGING LIVES THROUGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

WHEREAS, Ernest R. Jenkins began his career by organizing local communities, focusing on issues resulting from street gang violence and related inner-city problems. He was also known as “Ernie” by his family and friends; and

WHEREAS, in 1956, Ernie started working as a group worker for Chicago Youth Centers (CYC), there he met his wife, Gloria J. Jenkins, and began his life’s work; and

WHEREAS, Gloria J. Jenkins, during her tenure with (CYC), she worked as a bookkeeper, secretary, and a group worker. As a group worker, she implemented the “Gun Moll” program for girls who were members of gangs and usually carried weapons for their boyfriends. She was responsible for working with a minimum of 15 teen girls, 14 to 18 years of age, teaching several skills including etiquette, and structured sports. and

WHEREAS, Ernie served as Executive Director for Urban Programs West YMCA, Austin YMCA and the Southside YMCA, the latter of which he was instrumental in building. When Ernie joined the YMCA’s staff in the early seventies, he brought with him fifteen years’ experience in street work, program planning and community organizing. An enabler and organizer, Ernie’s major emphasis was on organizing community groups for self-help purposes; and

WHEREAS, in 1971, during his tenure as Vice President at for Community Development, Ernie, along with his wife Gloria, Danny K. Davis, and “Ma” Fletcher, co-founded the Westside Association for Community Action, affectionally known as WACA. Gloria was a board member from the inception (1971) until November 1993 when she accepted the position of Executive Director until her passing in 2006; and

WHEREAS, WACA was Ernie & Gloria’s life work and their most outstanding accomplishment. Their team provided the youth of Chicago’s Westside alternatives to negligent lifestyles. Ernie served as Chief Executive Officer until 2009 after formally “passing the torch” to his daughters, Gloria, and Lola however, his principals will always remain WACA’s voice; and

WHEREAS, The Westside Association for Community Action, WACA, as it is affectionately known in service arenas, is a community-based, social service agency. WACA has provided a wide range of critical services to residents within the North Lawndale, Austin, Brighton Park, and Garfield communities for over 40 years. Located on Chicago’s Westside, WACA’s mission has always been to identify and alleviate problems that contribute to the disintegration of local communities; and

WHEREAS WACA believed that if you “Give a man a fish; he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish, he will eat for a lifetime,” Is a reflection philosophy and by providing a safe, confidential, and non-judgmental environment, with counseling for the youth would increase the likelihood of behavioral modification; and

WHEREAS, Gloria and Ernie cared about the youth they served through WACA. They knew they would be the future of our communities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that I, Cook County Commissioner Dennis Deer of the 2nd District on behalf of President Toni Preckwinkle, the Cook County Board of Commissioners and on behalf of the over five million residents of Cook County, do hereby recognize and remember Gloria J. & Ernest R. Jenkins’ Life and Legacy of Changing Lives through Community Engagement.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Cook County Board establishes May 6, 2023 Ernest R. and Gloria J Jenkins Day in recognition of their lives and legacy and in honor of the street dedication being done in their honor in the 2nd County District.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a suitable copy of this Resolution be tendered to the family of the Ernest R. and Gloria J. Jenkin and a copy of the same is spread upon the official proceedings of this Honorable Body