



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 23-3722, **Version:** 1

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### **PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

#### **HONORING AND RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF JAMES TILMON, SR.**

**WHEREAS**, James Tilmon was born on Tuesday, July 31, 1934 in Guthrie, Oklahoma to George and Manila Tilmon, a local teacher and high school principal, and would go on to graduate from Lincoln University of Missouri with degrees in chemistry, education, and music; and

**WHEREAS**, after seeing a plane in the sky for the first time at the age of 5, James would learn to fly through his college's ROTC program and become a pilot for the US Army, commanding an accident-free aviation platoon and serving for 8 years until being honorably discharged as a Captain in the Army Corps of Engineers; and

**WHEREAS**, at 31 years old, James became the fifth Black commercial pilot in the United States as he flew for American Airlines for nearly 30 years; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Tilmon simultaneously began a broadcast television career with his own production company, Tilmon Productions, Inc., and "Our People," a weekly live show focused on Black Chicagoans that aired one week after the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr. from 1968 to 1972 on WTTW, Chicago's PBS station; and

**WHEREAS**, James then served 22 years as a meteorologist at NBC affiliate WMAQ-TV, where he continued hosting a live weekly show, winning a local Emmy in 1974 for "Tilmon Tempo"; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Tilmon would help found the National Association of Black Journalists in 1975, laying down a foundation for Black media members to pursue careers in broadcasting and news coverage; and

**WHEREAS**, James leaves behind multiple generations of family and many loving communities across Chicago to mourn his passing from this life on Saturday, January 16, 2021; and

**WHEREAS**, James Tilmon, Sr. lived a life that prioritized the day-to-day of Black people in Chicago and beyond, and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF COOK COUNTY: the President and its members do hereby hold their reverence in honor of the historic life of James Tilmon, Sr., as they offer their deepest condolences to her friends, family, and communities; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to the family of James Tilmon, Sr. as an honorable expression of appreciation for his life and work.