



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

---

**File #:** 22-0729, **Version:** 1

---

### **PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

#### **HONORING THE LIFE AND WORK OF MARSHA LYNN COLE**

**WHEREAS**, self-proclaimed social justice warrior Marsha Lynn Cole passed away far too soon on December 8, 2021; and

**WHEREAS**, Marsha was born September 10, 1954 to Beulah (nee White) Cole and Timothy Allen Cole. Marsha was raised in Evanston and married Blan Roger Wilson. They became parents to Kye Lynn Wilson and Cicely Lynn Fleming (Andrew). After her cousin Ardis Maupin passed, Marsha embraced her daughter, Jeanine Logan like her own; and

**WHEREAS**, Marsha was part of a family with deep roots in Evanston, including Samuel White, Jr., Marsha's grandfather, Democratic Party committeeman who served the 5th Ward when it was Evanston's only Democratic ward; Edna Summers, former Evanston 5<sup>th</sup> Ward alderwoman, township supervisor, and past president of the Evanston branch of the NAACP; Michael Summers and Rochelle Whyte-Washington, both former 5<sup>th</sup> Ward aldermen; Jerome Summers, former member of the Evanston/Skokie District 65 School Board; and her daughter, Cicely Fleming, current 9<sup>th</sup> Ward alderwoman; and

**WHEREAS**, Marsha's grandfather was a political community organizer before the term was invented. He would take his nine grandchildren when he went door-to-door urging people to vote. As a teenager, Marsha became a young Black Panther. She understood that the fight against injustice is an ongoing battle and imbued that spirit in her children and grandchildren; and

**WHEREAS**, in recent years, Marsha became involved in Jane Addams Senior Caucus (JASC)/Jane Addams Seniors In Action by joining JASIA to elect Maria Hadden Alderman of the 49th ward. Since that moment, she became a powerful and inspirational force within the organization, serving on both boards and on the housing committee. Marsha was instrumental in passing the Senior Safety Ordinance; and

**WHEREAS**, her activism was often born of personal experience. When she was looking for subsidized senior housing, she was on twenty waiting lists and had been waiting for over two years. She had to get two jobs just to pay her rent. As she observed, "If you're not getting subsidized housing, and food stamps, and the [low-income assistance] benefit on your utility bills, you cannot live off Social Security. You just cannot." She became a vocal advocate for the Tenants Bill of Rights and for a national Homes Guarantee; and

**WHEREAS**, Marsha was fearless. During a direct-action protest that JASC leaders planned on the American Medical Association, Marsha and fellow activists disguised themselves as doctors and temporarily shut down the AMA convention. Marsha famously grabbed the microphone from the speaker who was leading a session for thousands of doctors and began telling the story of how high medical bills had impacted her and her family and why we need Medicare For All. Marsha was never afraid to speak the truth and she had a clear vision of seniors aging with dignity. She regularly told everyone that she would be fighting until her dying days, which she did; and

**WHEREAS**, in Marsha's own words, "We are fighting for ourselves-and whether the young people know it or not, we are fighting so that when they get to be 65, they don't have to be on a three- or four- or five-year waiting list for affordable housing. We're tired. And if you ask other seniors, they will all tell you that they are tired, but they can't stop (fighting);" and

**WHEREAS**, in addition to her organizing and leadership, Marsha was a talented artist. She proudly shared her art with others and inspired many with her creative expression; and

**WHEREAS**, Marsha will be remembered for her free spirit; her determination; a desire to seek justice; her service to others; her love of music, art, and nature; and her love of family. In addition to her children, she is survived by her grandchildren: Cole Fleming (18), Genevieve Fleming (18), Natalia Fleming (16), Selah Joy Wilson (10), Ahimsa Logan (10), Satya Logan (7), and Nyabingi Logan (3).

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Cook County Board of Commissioners on behalf of the 5.2 million residents of Cook County honors the work and contributions of Marsha Cole, and herewith expresses its sincere gratitude for the invaluable contributions she has made to the Citizens of Cook County, Illinois; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a suitable copy of this Resolution be spread upon the official proceedings of this Honorable Body and that an official copy of the same be tendered to the family of Marsha Cole.