



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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File #: 23-4834, Version: 1

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### PROPOSED RESOLUTION

#### HONORING AND RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF ROCKY WIRTZ

**WHEREAS**, W. Rockwell “Rocky” Wirtz was born on Sunday, October 5, 1952, in Chicago, Illinois as the first of five children to Joan and Bill Wirtz, eventually inheriting ownership of the National Hockey League’s (“NHL”) Chicago Blackhawks team, which he led to three Stanley Cup Championships and 13-straight years of sold-out games at the United Center; and

**WHEREAS**, after graduating in 1975 from Northwestern University with a degree in Communications, Rocky worked in his family’s liquor distribution business, eventually assuming control of Wirtz Beverage Group in 2007 and staying on as co-chairman when it merged with Sunbelt to create the \$6 billion Breakthru Beverage Group. In 2014, Rocky received the Lifetime Achievement Award from Wine and Spirits of America for his international success in the beverage industry; and

**WHEREAS**, Rocky Wirtz became the half-owner of the United Center and the fifth principal owner of the Chicago Blackhawks in 2007. Rocky used his business ventures across the city to create a more fan-friendly team environment. Under Rocky’s leadership the Blackhawks became the leader in game attendance in the National Hockey League the following year while making a deep playoff run to begin over a decade of sold-out Blackhawks games; and

**WHEREAS**, after a record-setting season, the Blackhawks ended the National Hockey League’s second longest championship drought by defeating the Philadelphia Flyers to win the Stanley Cup Finals in 2010, the first of three championships the Blackhawks would win under Wirtz’s leadership. The Blackhawks would go on to defeat the Boston Bruins in 2013 and the Tampa Bay Lightning in 2015; and

**WHEREAS**, Rocky leaves behind his loving family, including his wife Marilyn Wirtz, his four children Danny (Anne) Wirtz, Hillary Wirtz (Erin Quaglia), Kendall (Brendan) Murphy, and Elizabeth Queen (Joe Barley), six grandchildren, and many loving fans across Chicago to mourn his passing from this life on Tuesday July 25, 2023; and

**WHEREAS**, Rocky Wirtz lived a life prioritizing the fandom of Chicago sports and galvanized the Chicago Blackhawks franchise into history with one of the most legendary eras in American sports history, 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 Rocky Wirtz, as they offer their deepest condolences to his friends, family, and communities; and

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