



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 24-0364, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

HONORING THE LIFE OF LUCILLE STEELE

WHEREAS, Lucille Steele was born January 3, 1936. Lucille was the only child born to the union of Deacon Alfred Bennett and Christine Bennett in Mason, Tennessee. Lucille attended Union Hill School in Tennessee until the death of her dad. Christine subsequently relocated to Blytheville, Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, Lucille had two children while living in the south, a son, and a daughter: Johnny (deceased) and Pamela. She worked as a farm laborer harvesting cotton, but always had a powerful desire for something more; and

WHEREAS, Lucille made the strategic decision to move to Chicago, because she wanted a better life and more opportunity for her children. Leaving her family to pursue that goal was a difficult choice, but she knew it felt right and she trusted her instincts to guide her; and

WHEREAS, her mother, Christine, stayed behind to care for Johnny and Pamela while Lucille found work in a factory making parts for telephones, and saved enough money to get an apartment for her family to live in. It was in a neighborhood where her children could get the education that she knew would be the foundation for their success. As a determined single parent, it didn't take her long to accomplish her goals, and soon thereafter she moved her family to Chicago for a fresh start; and

WHEREAS, Lucille gave birth to her last child, Chrystal, and continued to grow with the help of her mother, Christine, and the support of Chrystal's godparents and friends. Her life was blessed. Lucille wanted nothing but the best for her children, and she gave them long talks about the importance of education and how it could open doors to opportunity, eliminate poverty and cultivate their minds and spirit; and

WHEREAS, Lucille and her family learned about a ministry headed by C.V. Bass and his brother, Reverend James Bass at Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church, where she became an active member, contributing her tithes and offerings each week and Reverend Bass baptized her children; and

WHEREAS, Lucille sang in the Gospel choir, modeled in fashion shows, served in the food ministry and was infamously known for her caramel pound cakes and homemade ice cream. She also served as the supervisor of the Angelic Choir for years, mentoring over 40 youths and teaching them to love gospel music. She was very passionate about her relationship with God and invited many to give their life to Christ; and

WHEREAS, in her neighborhood on the west side of Chicago, Lucille was known as "The Snowball Queen". With an assist from her mother, Christine, and daughter, Chrystal, she sold snowballs, snacks, dinners, candy and her famous cake and ice cream for the neighbors to enjoy. Everyone loved her! Young people were drawn to her and would sit and talk with her while eating a snowball or ice cream; and

WHEREAS, Lucille was also a fashionista who took pride in wearing beautiful clothes, and lots of bling. She always had her makeup, nails and hair pulled together, even if she planned on being home all day. She was a social butterfly and the life of the party at the senior center where she and Vernon spent most of their time. She loved animals. She loved to sing, made time to visit the sick, and she enjoyed telling jokes and reciting poetry; and

WHEREAS, Lucille really missed her calling and could have been a standup comedian, and if she told the same joke more than once, it still made everyone laugh as much as it did the first time, they heard it. That's how Lucille approached life: always finding the humor in a situation, until she couldn't anymore. In the final years of her life, she relied on the comfort provided by her caregiver, Carmen; and

WHEREAS, Lucille transitioned into eternity on November 10, 2023, at Elmhurst Hospital. She leaves to cherish her memory and celebrate her life, her husband Vernon Steele, daughters, Pamela Wiggins (Thomas) and Chrystal Kyles (Joseph), grandchildren Jannea, Jessica, Joslynn, and Kyris, the Pruitt family of cousins from South Bend, Indiana, and a host of God's children, church families, close friends, and neighbors. She will truly be missed by all;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the President and Members of the Cook County Board of Commissioners does hereby honor the life of Lucille Steele as a distinguished member of the community;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this text be spread upon the official proceedings of this Honorable Body and a suitable copy be presented to the family of Lucille Steele so that her memory may be so honored and ever cherished.