Legislation Details

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Title:	PROPOSED RESOLUTION		

HONORING THE LIFE AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF ROSALIE CLARK

WHEREAS, Rosalie Clark, the City of Chicago's Director of Protocol for nearly two decades, died on June 26, 2020 at the age of 95; and

WHEREAS, born on the South side of Chicago on April 16, 1925, Clark attended St. Casimir Academy -Maria High School, where she participated in chorus and drama, and later attended Mount Mary University in Milwaukee; and

WHEREAS, Clark was married to William G. Clark, a former state legislator, Illinois Attorney General, and Chief Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court. Clark gained experience hosting fundraising events, meeting with reporters and high-profile government officials, and attending other campaign functions. It was during this time that she met Jane Byrne, then City Commissioner of Consumer Sales, who hand-picked Clark to serve on her staff after winning the 1979 Chicago mayoral election. Clark initially intended to work as the Director of Protocol only "for a year or two", but instead stayed to work under Mayors Byrne, Harold Washington, David Orr, Eugene Sawyer and Richard Daley; and

WHEREAS, Clark's duties involved greeting dignitaries and heads of state, arranging "courtesy visits" for celebrities wanting to meet the Mayor, and acting as "the City's chief hostess" for a wide array of events. She purchased cold-weather gear for Polish statesman Lech Walesa when her boss insisted on holding an outdoor rally in midwinter, scrambled to arrange Mikhail Gorbachev's impromptu visit to the Hard Rock Cafe, where he dined on nachos and beer and mingled with "real Chicagoans", coordinated a City Hall reception for the Dalai Lama, and watched Nelson Mandela deliver a speech wearing Bulls merchandise. She escorted celebrities including Arnold Schwarzenegger, Harrison Ford and Tony Bennett, and squired around Bishop Desmond Tutu, whom she described as "so warm and outgoing." Above all, Clark was responsible for making visitors feel at home - as she once told a reporter, "We get many noted visitors, from actors to ambassadors and prime ministers, and I love it when they say what a wonderful city Chicago is, and how friendly the people are."; and

WHEREAS, Clark was equally skilled in the more mundane aspects of her work. Anne Rashford, Clark's assistant of twelve years, described her former boss as the epitome of "grace under pressure." Rashford recalled an incident where, upon learning that a hired catering crew was incapable of cooking for a breakfast meeting in the Mayor's office, Clark took the task of cooking breakfast upon herself without hesitation. Rashford says "I was so lucky to work with her, grateful to start my career learning so much. She had such a zest for life, a seize-the-day mentality." James Sheahan, former City Director of Special Events, called Clark "the ultimate pro," and "really, really smart but also street smart, able to easily handle all the nuttiness of City Hall." "She could deal with truck drivers, and she could deal with heads of state. I always say that everyone is replaceable. She is not."; and

WHEREAS, in addition to her work at City Hall, Clark was a member of the boards of Illinois Federation of Democratic Women, Marillac House, Misericordia and Illinois State Museum. She enjoyed writing, gardening, entertaining and cooking for her family, and vacationing at Duck Lake in Michigan, where she was proud to be the only water-skiing grandmother on the lake; and

WHEREAS, Clark is survived by her daughter, Merrilee Redmond; her four sons, William Jr., John, Donald, and Robert; and her eleven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Her daughter said that, to the end, “she was almost constantly surrounded by family and friends.”

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of Cook County, on behalf of the 5.2 million residents of Cook County, honors the life and contributions of ROSALIE CLARK, 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 Body and that an official copy of the same be tendered to the family of ROSALIE CLARK.

Sponsors: LARRY SUFFREDIN, TONI PRECKWINKLE (President), FRANK J. AGUILAR, ALMA E. ANAYA, LUIS ARROYO JR, SCOTT R. BRITTON, JOHN P. DALEY, DENNIS DEER, BRIDGET DEGNEN, BRIDGET GAINER, BRANDON JOHNSON, BILL LOWRY, DONNA MILLER, STANLEY MOORE, KEVIN B. MORRISON, SEAN M. MORRISON, PETER N. SILVESTRI, DEBORAH SIMS

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments:

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
7/30/2020	1	Board of Commissioners	approve	Pass

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