



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 14-2387, **Version:** 1

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### **PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

#### **IN MEMORY OF THE HONORABLE JUDGE MICHAEL J. HOWLETT JR.**

**WHEREAS**, Judge Michael J. Howlett Jr, a man whose life was devoted to public service, family, and faith, died on March 16, 2014 leaving friends, family and a community profoundly enriched for having known him; and

**WHEREAS**, Michael Howlett Jr. grew up in Chicago's South Shore neighborhood in Saint Phillip Neri Parish surrounded by a family that emphasized leadership and community service. His maternal grandfather was Fourth Ward Alderman Joe Geary and his father, Michael Howlett Sr. served three terms as Illinois Auditor now called the Illinois Comptroller and one term as Illinois Secretary of State; and

**WHEREAS** Michael Howlett graduated from Sacred Heart-Griffin High School in Springfield, received a degree from St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota, and received his law degree from the University of Notre Dame; and

**WHEREAS**, as a new lawyer, Michael Howlett clerked for the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for Judge William J. Bauer who fondly described his clerk, Michael Howlett as "a natural-born public servant"; Howlett later spent a year as an assistant U.S. Attorney but left to assist with his father's run for governor; and

**WHEREAS**, Michael Howlett worked in private law practice in South Bend, Indiana where he represented his alma mater, the University of Notre Dame and later worked as a prosecutor in St. Joseph County, Indiana; and

**WHEREAS**, Michael Howlett was a respected lawyer who worked in two Chicago law firms and as a sole practitioner. He became a partner at Phelan, Pope and John. Later, he joined the law firm of Shefsky and Froelich where he chaired its litigation department, was counsel to Cook County state's attorney Dick Devine, and served as a legal liaison to the Archdiocese of Chicago; and

**WHEREAS**, Michael Howlett successfully managed many high profile and sensitive legal matters. He served as deputy outside counsel to the United States House Ethics Committee in their investigation of Speaker of the House Jim Wright; and

**WHEREAS**, Michael Howlett Jr. was an Associate Judge from 1983- 1986; was appointed to an interim judicial vacancy in 2005 and won election to the circuit court in 2006 and was retained in 2012 where he gained a reputation as a wise and courteous judge whose abilities were recognized and honored by his peers; the Illinois Judges Association presented him with their Distinguished Service Award on March 4, 2104; and

**WHEREAS**, Michael Howlett Jr. and his wife of over 43 years, attorney Kathleen Fitzgerald instilled a deep respect for the law that had an enduring impact on their three daughters: Melissa M. Howlett, Elizabeth E. Howlett and Catherine who chose to follow their parents into the profession; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Howlett was a popular professor at several area law schools, including the Loyola University Chicago School of Law and was a dedicated mentor to countless lawyers and judges; and

**WHEREAS**, Michael Howlett Jr was a compassionate advisor whose effective leadership of the Lawyer's Assistance

Program was renown. Judge Howlett made a meaningful and substantial difference in countless lives of those in the legal profession who struggled with substance-abuse; and

**WHEREAS**, Michael Howlett Jr was deeply involved in the world's refugee crisis and served on the board of the American Refugee committee. One of his missions for the committee was helping the Kosovo refugees in Macedonia by coordinating medical and legal services.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Commissioners of Cook County, on behalf of the 5.2 million residents of Cook County who he served dutifully, commemorates the extraordinary life of the Honorable Judge Michael J. Howlett Jr., and herewith expresses its sincere gratitude for the invaluable and innumerable contributions he 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 the Honorable Judge Michael J. Howlett Jr.