



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 15-1595, Version: 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING THE COOK COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION ON ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY

WHEREAS in 1869 Lloyd G. Wheeler became the first Black man licensed to practice law in the State of Illinois, and in 1894 Ida Platt became the first Black woman licensed to practice law in the State of Illinois. By 1896, 32 African Americans had been admitted to the Illinois Bar, and they began meeting informally to devise a legal strategy to protest discrimination in hotels, theaters, restaurants, schools and the judiciary; and,

WHEREAS this informal collaboration among African American attorneys lasted until 1914, when a younger generation of Black lawyers decided to form the Cook County Bar Association (“CCBA”) to improve, protect and defend the lives and rights of all citizens in the Greater Chicago Area. The CCBA is the oldest association of Black lawyers in the country; and,

WHEREAS since the CCBA’s inception, its members have served as advocates, judges, and legal educators, and as elected and appointed representatives, participating at every level of government, to fight injustice, to advocate on behalf of underserved communities, and to promote the interests of African American lawyers and judges; and,

WHEREAS throughout its distinguished history the CCBA has provided leadership, service, and advocacy for African American attorneys and to people residing in underserved communities; and,

WHEREAS the CCBA’s myriad accomplishments include the work of its outstanding members, such as C. Francis Stradford, who co-founded the *National Bar Association* in 1925; Earl B. Dickerson, who represented the plaintiffs in *Hansberry v. Lee*, the seminal 1940 case protesting restrictive covenants in Chicago’s housing markets; and William R. Ming, who served on the NAACP team litigating *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954; and,

WHEREAS since its founding, the CCBA has celebrated many firsts with its members, including Jewel Stradford LaFontant’s appointment as the first Black female Deputy Solicitor General; Edith Sampson’s election as Illinois’ first Black female Municipal Court Judge; James Parson’s appointment to the U.S. District Court; John Stroger’s election as Cook County Board President; and Harold Washington’s election as Mayor of the City of Chicago. The CCBA’s membership roster includes many members of the judiciary; members of the Chicago City Council, both past and present; and President Barack Obama, to name just a few; and,

WHEREAS the CCBA continues its tradition of service by providing a variety of legal programs to advance the legal profession and its members, such as sponsoring the largest job fair for law students in the Midwest, a Law Day for high school students, a free monthly legal clinic for Chicago residents, scholarships and awards, and expanded In Court Bar Program for CCBA members, various neighborhood legal forums, and Calll A Lawyer Day. The CCBA has also worked to develop an organized system for fair and impartial evaluations of judicial candidates, an effort which has led to a joint alliance with other minority bar associations; and,

WHEREAS the CCBA celebrated its centennial anniversary in 2014 with a vision for the future that honors its storied past, celebrates its present successes, and eagerly invites innovations that a rapidly changing society and the legal community require; and

WHEREAS it is in keeping with this spirit that the Cook County Bar Association adopted “CCBA 100: Service-Struggle - Success” as the theme for its Centennial Celebration;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Cook County President and Board of Commissioners do hereby commend the Cook County Bar Association for its unsurpassed contributions to the legal profession, for its sustained efforts to advance the cause of racial equality, and for its decades of service to the residents of Cook County, Illinois; and do hereby extend to the Cook County Bar Association our congratulations on achieving the milestone of its 100th Anniversary; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to the Board of Directors of the Cook County Bar Association as a token of our appreciation and esteem.