



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 15-2575, **Version:** 1

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### **PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

#### **COMMEMORATING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF THE HONORABLE JOAN BARR-SMITH**

**WHEREAS**, Mayor Joan Barr broke the glass ceiling and made history in the city of Evanston politics when she was elected the first woman mayor of the city in 1985; and

**WHEREAS**, Mayor Joan Barr died March 21, leaving behind a lasting legacy of positive change that is realized both in the sustained prosperity of Evanston as well as the full involvement of women in their local government; and

**WHEREAS**, Mayor Barr confronted frequent challenges during her two terms as mayor. She boldly confronted the city's enduring and problematic landfill issue. She deftly faced the contentious issue of downtown re-development. She played a major role in diplomatically addressing the needs of the rapidly growing city; she was an early champion of smart development and the building of the Evanston Public Library, improvements that have helped make Evanston what it is today; and

**WHEREAS**, Mayor Joan Barr was a tireless civil servant who diligently served the city of Evanston first, as alderman for eight years and later as mayor for eight years. She was uniformly regarded as collegial and respectful. She was a consensus builder who worked to get results through full participation and arduous debate and without rancor or aggression; and

**WHEREAS**, Joan Barr-Smith was dedicated to church life and was a prominent and treasured member of the Episcopal Church. She was a deacon in the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago in 2007 and later was ordained as a deacon at Saint Mark's Episcopal Church in Evanston. She was well known and admired in the Saint Mark Congregation as the champion of countless outreach projects to the community. She will long be remembered for her tireless work in the church's monthly food drives and annual collections of mittens and scarves as well as the hours she spent caring for parishioners who were sick or home-bound. She later became active with Grace Episcopal Church in Manchester, New Hampshire; and

**WHEREAS**, Joan Barr-Smith was born in Rogers Park into a politically active family; her father was a former assistant secretary of commerce and raised Joan to be very active in politics. She moved to Evanston in the early 1960s and later became a successful small business owner. She took her impressive resume as community organizer and manager and put it to work as the governmental affairs director for the American Dental Hygienists Association. She later worked as the Deputy Director of Administration and Finance for the Illinois Department of Employment Security; and

**WHEREAS**, Joan Barr-Smith was a major force for good in the community. She was active in many civic organizations. She served as president of the Dewey Community Conference and was involved with Northlight Theatre and Connections for the Homeless; and

**WHEREAS**, Joan Barr-Smith was a life-long learner. She received her under graduate degree from Syracuse University and much later in life she earned a master's degree in management from the Kellogg School at Northwestern University; and

**WHEREAS**, Joan Barr-Smith was an early feminist, one who proudly paved new territory for the next generation. While mayor, she served as President of the Northwest Municipal Conference and was on the Executive Committee of the U.S.

Conference of Mayors. She was decades ahead of her time and was a role model for countless young women leaders; and

**WHEREAS**, Joan Barr-Smith's dedication to community, impressive volunteer work and groundbreaking achievements in politics were inspirational to numerous young people, including the two daughters she was raising, oftentimes as a single parent. She will be sorely missed by her two daughters Jennifer Bell and Debra Nee, son-in-law Kevin Nee as well as her husband Wayne Smith; and

**WHEREAS**, Joan Barr-Smith's loss will be felt acutely by her all of her grandchildren: Patrick Nee, Emmet and Murphy Bell and step-grandchildren Ean and Neal Smith; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Commissioners of Cook County, on behalf of the 5.2 million residents of Cook County commemorates the life of Joan Barr-Smith, and herewith expresses its sincere gratitude for the 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 Honorable Body and that an official copy of the same be tendered to the family of Joan Barr-Smith.