



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 19-2306, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

HONORING WAYNE ADAMS SR.

WHEREAS, Mr. Wayne Adams Sr. was born in St. Joseph, MO on April 15, 1919 and lived there until he graduated from high school; and

WHEREAS, after he graduated, he moved to Chicago to join his mother and stepfather and has lived in Cook County ever since; and

WHEREAS, the family lived a short distance from the 124th Field Artillery Armory, which served both as a military training complex, and as a venue for midget auto races something he had wanted to see since he was 10, and in the fall of 1936, he saw his first race at the armory; and

WHEREAS, soon, he and his parents were attending races throughout the Midwest including summer races at Riverview Stadium, just outside of Riverview Amusement Park at Western and Belmont avenues. They traveled to Rockville, In., Fort Wayne, In., Winchester, In., Dayton, Oh., and Greenville, Oh. Locally, they attended races at the new Hammond Raceway in Indiana and Raceway Park in Blue Island; and

WHEREAS, in 1939, Mr. Adams began photographing the races and selling the pictures at the tracks for 50 cents and would go on to become the scorer at Raceway Park, and, late in 1940, was approached by Illustrated Speedway News to cover racing for that publication; and

WHEREAS, his first story in that national paper was about an indoor midget race at the International Amphitheater with Wally Zale winning the 100-lap feature after being down two laps; and

WHEREAS, during this time Wayne met his wife Grace (Boots) Stevens, a romance that would last 76 years; Grace's father had told Wayne he needed to have \$1,000 in the bank before they could wed so Wayne sold his car to get the money and they were married on Nov. 7, 1942; and

WHEREAS, the two first lived with Grace's parents in Englewood, but six weeks after the wedding, Wayne was inducted into the U.S. Army, reporting to Camp Grant in Northern Illinois then to Fort McLellan in Alabama for basic training; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Adams became an acting sergeant by his second week in the program, and asked to join the Officer Candidate School program for infantry, but there were no spaces available; and

WHEREAS, Grace visited Wayne at Fort McLellan and other camps during his time in the army, and while the rest of his company was shipped out, Wayne was left behind and reassigned to Camp Stewart in Georgia in April of 1943; and

WHEREAS, while there he stayed in the anti-aircraft cadre pool under the direction of a second lieutenant who

repeatedly told Wayne he would not make it as an officer in the army; however, undeterred, Wayne reapplied for OCS in anti-aircraft and was accepted and reassigned to Camp Davis in North Carolina on Oct. 9, 1943, graduating the program on January 20, 1944 as a 2nd Lieutenant; and

WHEREAS, in September 1944, he was sent to another officer pool, this time with the 1694th Engineering Battalion at Camp Rucker in Alabama, where he was selected to attend the 2nd Army Mine School learning the latest information on land mines, explosives, and booby traps; That class included every rank from second lieutenants to lieutenant colonels and Wayne posted the highest score in the class and was kept as an instructor there until the school closed; and

WHEREAS, when the school closed, Wayne was sent overseas to Manila in the Philippines. On July 22, 1945, he set sail on a 31-day voyage across the Pacific on the Cape Victory, which held 1,600 men including 800 black soldiers, landing at Batangas in Luzon and then he rejoined the 1694th at a camp north of Manila; and

WHEREAS, while there, he was one of 24 white officers selected to give basic training to a group of black soldiers; These men had been in the army for several years building the Alcan Highway, a supply route through Canada to Alaska, but had never received basic training; They were brought to Manila to help the rebuilding process there; In Wayne's first group, two of the men were from Chicago and one even knew his step-father's butcher shop, where they would meet again after the war; and

WHEREAS, after helping to rebuild the Filipino infrastructure Mr. Adams returned home in April 1946, where he rejoined his family and added another daughter, April Darlene, in July 1947; and

WHEREAS, after the war, Wayne again turned his attention toward auto racing; More than 6,000 fans watched the midgets race at Hanson Park on the northwest side and Wayne was asked to announce the second event of the 1947 season thus beginning a long career in auto racing announcing; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Adams retired from announcing in 1989 after calling 2,625 racing programs, and retired from his daytime job as a trophy salesman two years later; and

WHEREAS, Wayne was inducted into the National Old Timers Auto Racing Hall of Fame in Oct. 1988, the Grundy County Mazon Speed Bowl Hall of Fame in July 2004, the Illinois Stock Car Hall of Fame in April 2012, and the National Midget Auto Racing Hall of Fame in January 2014; and

WHEREAS, he and Grace had 4 children and moved to Dolton, IL and traveled the country, visiting 48 states, Mexico, and Canada during their marriage and had 9 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, sadly Grace passed away in March 2016 at age 90, and had been married to Wayne for 73 years and known each other just weeks short of 75 years; and

WHEREAS, Wayne will turn 100 years old this coming April, and recently met the newest addition to his family, a great-great-granddaughter;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the President and Members of the Cook County Board of Commissioners proudly honors Mr. Wayne Adams Sr. for his amazing life and career and his service to the Country, the community and Cook County; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, this text be spread upon the official proceedings of this Honorable Body and that a suitable copy be presented to Wayne Adams Sr.