



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 19-3572, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

HONORING THE LIFE OF RICHARD “DICK” THOLIN

WHEREAS, Richard D. Tholin was a teacher, minister, and activist who brought his faith and his commitments to peace and justice to everything he taught or did; and

WHEREAS, Dick was born on June 28, 1928. He grew up in Downers Grove before moving with his family to Edison Park on Chicago’s northwest side. He attended Taft High School and then North Central College, graduating with a B.A. in Sociology in 1949. In 1952, he graduated from Evangelical Theological Seminary. He was ordained in the Illinois Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church in 1953; and

WHEREAS, in 1951, he married Phyllis Eckardt whom he had met at North Central. In 1952, the couple moved to Diversey Parkway Evangelical United Brethren Church where Dick served as Pastor for seven years.; and

WHEREAS, in 1959, he enrolled in Union Theological Seminary where he earned a Master’s degree in World Missions and a Ph.D. in Christian Ethics. He returned to Evangelical Theological Seminary in 1963 as a professor of Church and Community. With the merger of the Evangelical Theological Seminary and Garrett Theological Seminary, he moved with his family to Evanston where he taught at Garrett- Evangelical Theological Seminary until his retirement in 1993. The last eight years of his tenure, he served as Academic Dean and Vice President of Academic Affairs; and

WHEREAS, over his years of teaching, Dick instructed hundreds of soon-to-be-pastors on the importance of understanding and engaging in the social and economic issues of the communities they would serve, both urban and rural; and

WHEREAS, throughout his life, Dick fought for social and racial justice, and for peace, locally, nationally, and internationally, both inside and outside the church; and

WHEREAS, in 1963, he joined a group of ministers on a trip to Jackson, Mississippi, to walk with African American students into White Methodist churches, risking arrest and solidifying his commitment to racial justice in the north; and

WHEREAS, while living in Naperville, he was one of seven plaintiffs who sued DuPage County for promoting racial and economic discrimination in housing, and helped Naperville become the second Chicago suburb to adopt a Fair Housing Ordinance. He worked to organize opposition to the war in Vietnam, stood up for draft-aged young men resisting the draft, and was a leader and board chair of North Suburban Peace Initiative, now called Chicago Area Peace Action; and

WHEREAS, Dick’s work with the United Methodist Church influenced numerous national and international policies and actions. In 1952, he was a delegate to the World Conference of Christian Youth in India. During his 16 years on the National Boards of Church and Society and Global Ministries, he worked with African leaders on the development of the United Methodist Church, represented the church in the successful effort to stop Nestle from undermining breastfeeding in developing countries, and helped lead an ecumenical dialogue on death and dying.; and

WHEREAS, after a lifetime of civil disobedience and protest, his first arrest came at the United Methodist General Conference in 2000, while participating in a demonstration in support of LGBTQ rights and an inclusive church. He

officiated at same sex unions, prior to and after the legalization of gay marriage; and

WHEREAS, Dick had a passion for Chicago history, over time developing an extensive personal collection of Chicago books and publications, which was donated to the North Central College Library in 2008. Dick played and loved basketball, tennis, and especially handball, which he continued playing with vigor into his 80's; and

WHEREAS, Dick is survived by his wife, Phyllis Eckardt Tholin; his children Kathryn Tholin (Steve Starr), Barbara Tholin, and David Tholin; and grandchildren Robin Starr Tholin and Ellis Linne Wunsch.

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 **RICHARD "DICK" THOLIN**, and herewith expresses its sincere gratitude for the invaluable 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 **RICHARD "DICK" THOLIN**.