



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 19-4203, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

HONORING THE HONORABLE JOHN A. OSTENBURG FOR HIS DEDICATED SERVICE TO THE VILLAGE OF PARK FOREST

WHEREAS, John A. Ostenburg was first elected as Mayor of Park Forest, Illinois, in 1999 and was re-elected without opposition in 2003, re-elected in 2007, 2011 and 2015, and is the longest serving mayor in the history of the municipality; and

WHEREAS, John A. Ostenburg began his long history of service to the Park Forest community not long after moving there serving on the Board of Directors of the Birch Street Townhomes Cooperative since 1983 and is currently the Vice-President; and

WHEREAS, John's public service began in 1985 when he became a Trustee of Park Forest, serving from 1985 to 1990 and from 1997 to 1999, and between his terms as Trustee, John served as State Representative of the 80th House District from 1992 to 1995; and

WHEREAS, John made a significant impact on the Park Forest community and was instrumental in diversifying the Village Board, both in race and gender, through careful appointments to fill multiple Trustee vacancies including: Bonita Dillard, Mae Brandon and Georgia O'Neill; each of whom was elected several times by the Park Forest residents; and

WHEREAS, John's visionary approach resulted in numerous initiatives and successes for Park Forest including: Park Forest being an All-American City finalist in 2000 and 2006, being a Chicago Tribune Top 100 workplace in 2010, the implementation of the award-winning Park Forest Sustainability Plan in 2012, a 3-STAR designation in 2014 and the SolSmart "Gold" designation in 2015, and was the recipient of the Distinguished Budget Award and Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting for more than 20 consecutive years; and

WHEREAS, John's leadership influence expanded far beyond the boundaries of Park Forest as he was heavily involved at the regional, state and federal levels, serving on various posts at the appointment of the Cook County Board President and the Illinois Municipal League; he is the immediate past President of the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, was Chairman of the Board for the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, a member of the South Suburban Health Advisory Council, and is one of 15 Directors of the Cook County Land Bank Authority; and

WHEREAS, he has also served as Chair of the Chicago Southland Housing & Community Development Collaborative; served on the Community & Economic Development Committee of the National League of Cities (NLC) and the Co-Chair of the Race Equity & Leadership initiative in the NLC; and

WHEREAS, John was an unwavering proponent of regionalism, equality, diversity and environmentalism and well known to use the mantra of leaders "locking arms" in response to issues impacting communities of the Southland, and was the recipient of the Diversity 2009 Award from Diversity, Inc., "In Recognition of Exceptional Leadership on Issues of Diversity, Unity, and Equality in the Chicago Southland"; and

WHEREAS, John was an advocate of civic engagement and resident involvement in decision making processes, conducting numerous community surveys, dozens of neighborhood meeting, and hundreds of resident appointments were made to the various volunteer boards; and

WHEREAS, beyond public service, John Ostenburg's career included teaching at elementary and secondary school levels before becoming affiliated with several institutions of higher learning; He taught journalism and communications courses in addition to serving in the posts of Director of Alumni Affairs and Sports Information Director at Lewis University, Executive Director of the College Foundation at Prairie State College, and Director of University Relations at Governors State University; and

WHEREAS, his professional career also included multiple posts with the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU), spanning three different presidents of the CTU he served as Editor of the Chicago Union Teacher, Communications Department Chair and lastly as Chief of Staff; and

WHEREAS, besides being a teacher and overseeing various collegiate departmental posts, John served as a journalist with various news publications including the *Illinois State Journal* in Springfield, the *Joliet Herald-News*, *The Times of Hammond*, Indiana, the Crescent Newspaper chain, the *Lockport Free Press* and the Herald-News Community Newspapers in central Illinois; and

WHEREAS, in addition to all of the above, John found time to volunteer with the Rotary Club, the League of Women Voters and the American Civil Liberties Union, among many others; and

WHEREAS, after providing 4 decades of effective, ethical and fair service and leadership to Park Forest, John A. Ostenburg decided to retire at the end of his final term as Mayor in May of this year;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the President and Members of the Cook County Board of Commissioners do hereby offer its deepest appreciation to John A. Ostenburg for his many years of dedicated service to the country, the Village of Park Forest and Cook County; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we wish John great health and much happiness in his retirement from public service; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, this text be spread upon the official proceedings of this Honorable Body and a suitable copy be presented to John A. Ostenburg as a symbol of our respect and esteem.