



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

HONORING 40 YEARS OF HECTOR HERNÁNDEZ'S COMMITMENT TO THE CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY AND THE RUDY LOZANO BRANCH LIBRARY

WHEREAS, Hector Hernández was born in General Treviño, Nuevo León, México, on January 25, 1953 to Juan Hernández Gómez and Narcedalia Madrigal Guerra; and

WHEREAS, his father, Juan, was a migrant worker for Chicago and Northwestern Railways, and was able to bring his wife and seven children to the United States in 1965; and

WHEREAS, the family first settled in the Bridgeport community of Chicago where Mr. Hernández attended Nativity of Our Lord School, now Bridgeport Academy, where he won spelling contests at a young age; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hernández graduated from De La Salle Institute in 1972 and earned a Bachelor's degree in Spanish Language and Literature from the University of Illinois at Chicago in 1976; and

WHEREAS, after college, Mr. Hernández landed his first Chicago Public Library job in 1977, and held positions at various branches that include Back of the Yards, North Lakeview and Logan Square; and

WHEREAS, having witnessed his two older sisters who had been teachers in Mexico work as laborers at a lamp company in Chicago, he saw the hardships migrants in the U.S. face and knew he had to continue his education to improve his quality of life; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hernández went on to earn two Master's degrees from the University of Illinois, a Master's in Library Science and a Master's in Spanish Literature; and

WHEREAS, as he was about to begin a doctoral program in Spanish Literature at the University of Indiana at Bloomington in 1985, Mr. Hernández's life and career changed course; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hernández was offered a position as head of the Chicago Public Library's Spanish Information Center and also served as assistant head of the Foreign Languages Section and Hispanic Services Coordinator, and was based at the main branch in what is now the Chicago Cultural Center; and

WHEREAS, while there, he promoted literacy among the rapidly growing Mexican community in Chicago, and also led efforts to inform them through local newspapers and radio that the library can be used as a hub for resources on jobs as well as social and legal services; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hernández was featured in a 1989 issue of *American Libraries*, a publication of the American Library Association, where he was quoted as saying "The library has to reach out to Hispanics and make them feel that the library belongs to them"; and

WHEREAS, during his time at the main branch, a devastating earthquake in Mexico City caused chaos in Chicago's Mexican community, and Mr. Hernández recalls the library receiving many inquiries on how people could receive news of their loved ones; and

WHEREAS, community-led efforts in Pilsen at the time had succeeded in the 1985 groundbreaking of what would become the Rudy Lozano Library Branch, named after the community organizer and leader who was tragically killed in 1983; and

WHEREAS, the Rudy Lozano Library Branch became officially open in 1989, and Mr. Hernández was named its first, and until now its only, branch manager; and

WHEREAS, for thirty years, Mr. Hernández has led the Rudy Lozano Library Branch as the public library with the largest Spanish-language collection in the Midwest; and

WHEREAS, renowned for its diverse programming and the cultural and social services it provides, Mr. Hernández considers his major accomplishment at the library to be the establishment of the Knight Moves Chess Club; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hernández has been devoted to using the library as a space to teach chess to local youth, leading many to win local and national championships and scholarships, and setting them on a proven pathway of academic and professional success; and

WHEREAS, among his accolades, Mr. Hernández has received both the Excellence in Teaching Award and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Illinois Chess Association, as well as the Pride of Pilsen Award, and recognitions from Casa Aztlán, the Hispanic Literacy Council, and Pilsen Alliance; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hernández will retire on September 30, 2019 and plans to continue coaching chess.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners does hereby honor the forty years Mr. Hernández has been committed to the promotion of Spanish language and Mexican culture, and his service to the Latino community in Chicago; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a suitable copy of this resolution be tendered to Hector Hernández as a symbol of recognition and gratitude for his contributions to serving countless youth, library patrons, and the Spanish-speaking community of Chicago.