



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 20-0762, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

HONORING FATHER GEORGE CLEMENTS

WHEREAS, Rev. George Clements was a longtime civil rights advocate from Chicago's South Side who was also known as the first Catholic priest to adopt a child, and later, three more; and

WHEREAS, active in the civil rights movement, Rev. Clements marched with the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., in Chicago, Alabama and Mississippi and was arrested during the protests; and

WHEREAS, Father Clements spearheaded the "One Church-One Child" program in 1980, which aimed to spur Catholic churches to find adoptive parents for orphaned black children; and

WHEREAS, Friday, 51, one of Father Clements' adopted sons, said "This morning our dad decided that he needed to go home, that his work here on earth was done"; and

WHEREAS, Friday reflected, "The rectory was always open. If the doorbell rang, it had to be opened. And guess what, when the staff was gone, it was our responsibility. We had to open that door and our father would come downstairs and try to calm the situation," His son stated: "Despite being pulled in all directions, Father Clements still found time to be a great dad. We never lacked for anything in life," said Friday, an investigator with the Cook County Public Defender's office. "I graduated from college without having a student loan", and

WHEREAS, Father Clements hid Bobby Rush, when he was a Black Panther, and police were searching for him, while on the run following a police raid on the West Side that left Black Panther leader Fred Hampton dead in 1969; and

WHEREAS, Rev. George Clements made black Catholics proud to be black Catholics. He was a pioneering voice when black Catholics felt excluded, forgotten, and ignored in the Catholic church;
and

WHEREAS, Father Clements' career inspired a made-for-TV movie in 1987 By Carlos Ballesteros and Mitch Dudek, "The Father Clements Story," which made the priest "a pioneering voice in the movement for adoptions by priests."

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the President and the Cook County Board of Commissioners, on behalf of the residents of Cook County, honor Father George Clements and praise his essential contribution to the health and viability of Cook County