



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 21-3186, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION HONORING THE EXTRAORDINARY LIFE OF LEONARD KNIFFEL

WHEREAS on March 19, 2021 Leonard Kniffel, 73, passed away after pancreatic cancer; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kniffel was raised in rural Michigan by his grandmother, who came to the United States from Poland; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kniffel began his remarkable career in Detroit, working at the Detroit Public Library. During this time, he met his future spouse, Carlon Walker; and

WHEREAS, in 1988, Mr. Kniffel and Carlon moved to Chicago, where Mr. Kniffel worked for American Libraries, the flagship magazine of the Chicago-based American Library Association. Mr. Kniffel was quickly promoted to the Managing Editor, and then Editor in Chief; and

WHEREAS, Inspired by his grandmother and her exciting travels to Poland, Mr. Kniffel wrote and published a series of books about his Polish heritage, including a travel memoir titled, "A Polish Son in the Motherland: An American's Journey Home." He helped other Polish authors, frequently volunteering to help edit and publish their work; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kniffel founded a blog named "PolishSon.com", where he wrote about Poland, shared recipes and stories about his family and articles about libraries; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kniffel's work sent him around the world, reporting on the annual conferences of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institution and speaking about the importance of libraries, archives, and preserving historical records. Mr. Kniffel and Carlon traveled across Europe, Asia, Africa and South America together; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kniffel was the creator and publisher of the American Library Association's "@ your library" public awareness website (www.atyourlibrary.org). As a part of a series called "Reading with the Stars: A Celebration of Books and Libraries," Mr. Kniffel conducted interviews with library advocates including President Barack Obama, entertainers Julie Andrews and Jamie Lee Curtis, Microsoft founder Bill Gates, First Lady Laura Bush, and basketball legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar; and

WHEREAS, after retiring from the American Library Association in 2012, Mr. Kniffel became the Executive Director of the Chicago-based Polish American Librarians Association and a member of the Board of Directors of the Polish Museum of America, located at 984 N. Milwaukee Avenue; and

WHEREAS, through his stalwart dedication, Mr. Kniffel worked to uplift and increase awareness about the Polish community, while promoting Polish heritage and documenting the history of his community, he will be greatly missed by his family, friends, and community. He is survived by his partner of nearly 43 years, Carlon Walker, and many friends throughout the world;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the President and the Cook County Board of Commissioners, on behalf of the residents of Cook County, hereby offer its deepest condolences family and friends of Leonard Kniffel, as we celebrate and

honor the life and contributions of this outstanding Cook County twelfth district resident; 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 Leonard Kniffel.