



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 21-5021, **Version:** 1

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### **PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

#### **HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF ALBERT PRITCHETT, JR.**

**WHEREAS**, Almighty God has taken from our midst Albert (Al) Pritchett Jr. a devoted family man and accomplished pioneer in African American governmental leadership in numerous governments in Cook County; and

**WHEREAS**, Al Pritchett was born in Crawfordsville, Arkansas on September 18, 1932, the oldest of four children, to Albert Sr. and Rebecca Pritchett. In 1936 the family moved to Chicago, settling on 38th and Indiana Avenue. Albert began his education at Wendell Phillips Elementary School and continued at Wendell Phillips High School where he excelled in the classroom and in sports, lettering in track and field and football; and

**WHEREAS**, after graduating High School in 1950 Al matriculated to Marquette University in Milwaukee Wisconsin where he continued to exude academic excellence and athletic prowess graduating in June of 1955. Al Pritchett was drafted into the US Navy later that year and, while home on leave, he married the love of his life, Gloria Fay Hunter on June 1, 1957. Their union would last 64 years and would see the birth of their daughters Jeanette Marie and Valerie Ann, and

**WHEREAS**, Al possessed a deep love and affection for family which was displayed endlessly when imparting wisdom and guidance to his grandchildren: Aja Monique Brown, Rebeka Leigh Thomas, Komae Julian Brown, Vivian Marie Thomas, Kaela Simone Brown, and Elan Michele Brown, (In-Law) Jonathan A. Thomas, Jillian A. Thomas & Jason A. Thomas, and his great-grandchildren: Kamyla Marie-Julianne Brown, Braylen Perez Daniels, Kamora Leanne Brown, Bryson Perez Daniels, and Komae Julian Brown Jr., and

**WHEREAS**, Al Pritchett would begin a 40 plus year career of public service in 1958 with the Chicago Park District; and

**WHEREAS**, beginning in 1966 under Mayor Richard J. Daley, Albert Pritchett helped to rebuild and revitalize many neighborhoods throughout the City of Chicago during his work as Deputy Director for the Near South Area with the Chicago Committee on Urban Opportunity (CCUO). In 1972, Al Pritchett began a positive working relationship between the City of Chicago and local social service agencies when he became the Director of Delegate Agency Services for the City of Chicago's Model Cities Program--a forerunner of the current city Department of Human Services; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1975, Al Pritchett became the Acting Director of the newly-merged Model Cities/CCUO office, where he was responsible for the overall direction and administration of Chicago's comprehensive human service agency which had relationships with 300 delegate agencies and over 1000 program components; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1977, Chicago Mayor Michael Bilandic appointed Al Pritchett to the position of Special Assistant to the Mayor, where he coordinated the human service activities of several departments on behalf of the Mayor; and in 1979, he was appointed to the position of Assistant Director of the City of Chicago Department of Public Safety, where he helped City departments prepare swift and effective responses to emergencies and disasters; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1982, Al Pritchett would begin his service to the County of Cook in the office of Cook County Assessor Thomas C. Hynes as Chief Administrative Officer for the Assessor's Office, providing leadership to the employees of the office and assistance to taxpayers with concerns regarding their properties; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1991, Cook County Board President Richard J. Phelan would appoint Al Pritchett as Cook County Chief Administrative Officer of Cook County, the second person to hold that position, and the first African American to be appointed to this position in the County's history; and

**WHEREAS**, Albert Pritchett's tenure as Chief Administrative Officer would continue through the administration of President John H. Stroger, Jr. where he would play a key role in shaping policy on economic development, human service programs and veterans programs. He led efforts to bring 911 emergency telephone services to all of Cook County; coordinated Cook County's hosting of the 1993 National Association of Counties annual convention; strengthened the Chicago Chapter of the National Forum for Black Public Administrators; advanced Cook County's adaptation of technology and consolidation of the downtown offices of Cook County Government. Al Pritchett's legacy as Chief Administrative Officer was one of fairness, loyalty, attention to detail, efficiency, a commitment to working together and a dedication to effective government working on behalf of all residents of Cook County; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1998, Al Pritchett decided to retire from Cook County Government, ending his career in public service--so he thought. President John Stroger would call upon Al Pritchett again in 2003 to serve as Interim Superintendent of the Forest Preserve District, restoring faith and strong leadership to the organization. In 2006 Cook County Board President Bobbie L. Steele tapped Al Pritchett to serve as her Chief of Staff during her brief tenure in office. Later, Al Pritchett would find himself accepting appointments to a number of boards and commissions that supported everything from the Forest Preserves to the Census count; and

**WHEREAS**, in retirement, Al Pritchett could enjoy time with the loves of his life--his family and the world of sports. There was time to travel to various parts of the world, to spend time with grandchildren and great grandchildren and time to watch and discuss sports. He regularly attended world championship track and field meets with his wife Gloria and their friends, no distance was too far to travel to see a good meet. He was also an avid supporter of Chicago's sports teams holding season tickets at one time or another to the Bears, Bulls and White Sox.

**WHEREAS**, his time in public service did not shape Al Pritchett--Al Pritchett shaped his time in public service. At every level of government, from children and young people whom he mentored at the Park District to families and whole neighborhoods who sought out the help of the Model Cities/CCUO Community Centers, to the staff persons he hired, taught leadership skills to and emphasized the importance of loyalty, honesty and dedication to in getting the job done. Al Pritchett's professional legacy is seen in the future success of those individuals who worked for him. Two of his personal staff as Chief Administrative Officer would go on to also become Chief Administrative Officer and another would become Secretary to the Cook County Board; and

**WHEREAS**, those who worked for him did so not in fear of him, but in fear of disappointing him; they would live by the Elbert Hubbard quote which was on the walls of every office he ever occupied:

***"If you work for a man, in Heaven's name work for him! If he pays you wages that supply your bread and butter, work for him, stand by him, and stand by the institution he represents. If put to a pinch, an ounce of loyalty is worth a pond of cleverness. If you must vilify, condemn and eternally disparage - Resign your position"***

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Commissioners of Cook County on behalf of the residents of Cook County honor the life of love and work led by Albert Pritchett, Jr; that the Board thank Gloria Fay Pritchett and her entire family for sharing the time of their husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather with Cook County Government--a place he made better for all of us.