



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND WORK OF MAMIE TILL MOBLEY

WHEREAS, Mamie Elizabeth Till Mobley (nee Carthan) was born in Webb, Mississippi on November 23, 1921. Her family moved to Argo, Illinois in the Great Migration when she was a toddler; and

WHEREAS, her childhood home was a gathering place for Black people who left the South in search of a new life. Mamie's family called their Chicago suburb "Little Mississippi". Her mother, Alma Carthan, helped her people who had newly arrived in Illinois to adjust and find jobs; and

WHEREAS, young Mamie was passionate about learning and was a high honor roll student, a remarkable achievement in a predominantly white school in the 1930's. She was only the 4th Black student to graduate from Argo Community High School; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Mamie Till Mobley's son Emmett was abducted and brutally murdered on August 28, 1955, after being falsely accused of interacting inappropriately with a white woman. Roy Bryant and J.W. Milam, who later admitted to the murder, were acquitted by the all-white jury after only 67 minutes of deliberation; and

WHEREAS, officials in Mississippi were determined to bury Emmett locally to cover up the brutality of the crime and quickly had a grave dug with his name on it. Mamie quickly persuaded officials to return her son to Chicago and paid nearly a year's salary for the transport; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Till Mobley changed the course of history through tremendous personal sacrifice by insisting that her son's casket be open to create public awareness of the brutality of Emmett's death. She had to advocate with both Mississippi and Illinois officials who wanted the casket closed to obscure the violence of his murder. The Till case became emblematic of the racial disparity of justice for Black Americans; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Till Mobley leveraged the publicity to bring attention to racial oppression and violence. She toured the country with the NAACP, relating the events of her son's life, death, and the trial of his murderers; and

WHEREAS, much of Mamie Till Mobley's work centered around education through public speaking, she also spent 23 years teaching in Chicago Public Schools. She worked throughout her life to help children living in poverty; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Mamie Till Mobley established a group called "The Emmett Till Players," which worked with school children outside of the classroom. The members learned and performed famous speeches by civil rights leaders to ensure Black youth were aware of their true history; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Mamie Till Mobley would have turned 100 years old this past November, and her legacy lives on through the work of the Mamie Till Mobley Memorial Foundation to bring awareness to the courageous life of Ms. Till Mobley as activist and public servant; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of Cook County hereby recognizes the extraordinary achievements of Mamie Till Mobley and with this resolution honors her life and work;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution be tendered to the Mamie Till Mobley Memorial Foundation as a token of the esteem in which Ms. Till Mobley is held by the President of the Cook County Board of Commissioners and the Cook County Board of Commissioners.