



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 22-5434, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

HONORING THE LIFE OF ERICH MICHAEL HIMMEL

WHEREAS, Almighty God in His infinite wisdom called Erich Michael Himmel from our midst on Monday, August 29, 2022, and

WHEREAS, Erich Himmel was the beloved husband of 65 years to Ingeborg (nee Brauer), and

WHEREAS, Erich and Ingeborg became loving parents and grandparents and great-grandparents for whom love of family and love of community were uniquely joined, and

WHEREAS, Erich Himmel was the devoted father of Diana (Jerry) and Carol, and

WHEREAS, Erich Himmel was the proud grandfather of Erich “Bubba” (Esther), Michelle (J.J.), Ashley, and

WHEREAS, Erich Himmel was the proud great-grandfather of Parker and Hudson, who were the light of his eyes, and

WHEREAS, Erich Himmel was to become a major German community leader in Chicagoland but first he had to get to this country, and

WHEREAS, Erich Himmel was born in Mosbach, Germany, outside Munich, on January 3, 1936, three months before his father died, and

WHEREAS, Erich Himmel met Ingeborg when he was 17 and wanted to wait until he was 30 to marry, and

WHEREAS, Inge moved to work in Montreal, whereupon Erich decided he loved her so much that he wanted her back, and

WHEREAS, He had to sell his Vespa cycle to buy a ticket for her to return, ensuring that they would be together the rest of his days, and

WHEREAS, The married couple emigrated to the United States in 1958, to the ironically named Berlin, New Hampshire, and

WHEREAS, Erich worked as a night watchman for a gym shoe factory in his American Berlin, and

WHEREAS, after several months Erich and Inge moved to Chicago, where Erich worked for Volkswagen as a mechanic, and

WHEREAS, two years later Erich was drafted into the U.S. Army and stationed in Germany while the Berlin Wall was built, and

WHEREAS, after his military service ended, Erich and Inge returned to Chicago where he worked for Volkswagen as a General Manager opening several VW dealerships, and

WHEREAS, Erich missed his native Germany and moved back, stayed a month and returned to Chicago, and

WHEREAS, Erich Himmel opened Erich's Lehigh Auto Body in Niles in 1982 where it continues to flourish with the help of his daughter, Carol, and now grandson Erich at the helm, and

WHEREAS, Erich Himmel became a longtime supporter of, and leader in, the German-American community in Chicagoland, and

WHEREAS, while Erich Himmel would live in America he loved German culture and determined to foster it here, and

WHEREAS, Erich Himmel became President of the Rheinischer Verein Mardi Gras Society, a position he held for more than 25 years, and

WHEREAS, Erich Himmel fostered the Rheinischer Mardi Gras Society's maintenance of traditions, such as electing a Prince and Princess to oversee its spirited celebrations and presenting dance and music groups for appreciative German audiences, and

WHEREAS, Erich Himmel became President of the United German American Societies, a position he held for some 33 years, and

WHEREAS, the Societies preserved German culture through song, dance and soccer programs, to Erich's great delight, and

WHEREAS, word about Erich Himmel's devotion to German culture began to spread around the world, notably to Germany, and

WHEREAS, Erich Himmel in 1984 was awarded Germany's highest civilian honor from the President of Germany, the Bundesverdienstkreutz First Class medal of honor, for his contribution to the preservation of the German Culture in a foreign land, and

WHEREAS, Erich Himmel ran the splendid "German Day" celebration in Lincoln Square for many years, helping Lincoln Square maintain itself as a leading business and cultural community on Chicago's North Side, and

WHEREAS, Erich Himmel was the Grand Marshall of the Von Steuben Day Parade for 35 years, making sure that a German-born hero of the American Revolution, Baron Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben, got his due, and

WHEREAS, Erich Himmel was a friend and confidant to many in and out of the German community, with an infectious smile, wonderful sense of humor, huge heart, fine singing voice and a memorable upturned mustache, and

WHEREAS, Himmel's, at 2251 W. Lawrence Ave., in Chicago is a European Bistro serving German food along with pizza, and

WHEREAS, Visitors to Himmel's greeted by Erich and Inge will have an evening that will come to song and schnapps, and there are no strangers at Himmel's, and

WHEREAS, Erich Himmel was a pillar of the German-American community for over half a century, whose counsel was the result of wisdom joined to a steady manner that made all who knew him believe that he was quite special, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the President and members of the Cook County Board of Commissioners do hereby extend their deepest condolences to the family and friends of Erich Michael Himmel, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this text be spread upon the official proceedings of this Honorable Body, and that a suitable copy of this resolution to be tendered to the family of Erich Michael Himmel so that his memory may be so honored and ever cherished.