



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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### PROPOSED RESOLUTION

#### HONORING THE LIFE AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF DAVID ELLIS

**WHEREAS**, David Ellis, General Manager of the Evanston Symphony Orchestra for 18 years, died at the age of 75 on July 26, 1022. The loss to his family, friends and the Evanston Symphony is immeasurable; and

**WHEREAS**, Ellis was born in Johnson City, Tennessee, into a military family. His parents and four younger siblings eventually settled in San Diego where Ellis would attend the University of California San Diego, earning a B.S. in geology (with a minor in music) followed by an M.S. in geological oceanography from Oregon State; and

**WHEREAS**, while Ellis was an excellent athlete having participated in several marathons and was a lifelong tennis player, he was known foremost for his love and knowledge of classical music; and

**WHEREAS**, throughout his professional life Ellis wore many hats, making use of his science degrees at Northwestern University before receiving an MBA from the University of Chicago. He transitioned into a career in finance while at Harza Engineering, and was then hired by Consolidated Foods (now Sara Lee) where he worked for many years in the position of Assistant Treasurer; and

**WHEREAS**, a long-time subscriber to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Lyric Opera, he was able to combine his deep knowledge of music with his experience in finance when he accepted the role of General Manager of the Evanston Symphony; and

**WHEREAS**, Ellis had an encyclopedic knowledge of classical music and a head filled with facts ranging from every Mozart Köchel number to which recording of a Mahler symphony - he had them all - was the best, to arcane, funny anecdotes about eccentric conductors. He also knew all of the musicians and all of the ESO's subscribers, including their concert hall seat numbers; and

**WHEREAS**, an article about Ellis in a 2021 edition of the ESO's *Noteworthy*, a newsletter that the ESO sent to subscribers read: *David can tell you about the differences in sound quality created by various conductors. He knows which conductors emphasize the strings and which favor the brass. He talks about how the brightness of sound changes if you tune the orchestra a few hertz higher (a 445 Hz makes a brighter sound than 440 Hz), and he easily compares the sound quality of music venues from [among many others] Chicago's Orchestra Hall and Auditorium Theater to the ESO's homes of Pick-Staiger and the ETHS Auditorium*; and

**WHEREAS**, his many accomplishments over 18 years with the orchestra include growing the ESO's subscriber base, facilitating the recording of a live CD, providing interesting details at the orchestra's Musical Insights pre-concert lectures and keeping the organization solvent during the pandemic lockdown. It was a job he threw himself into fully, did exceptionally well, and enjoyed immensely; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2013, he was named the 2012 General Manager of the Year award from the Illinois Council of Orchestras ; and

**WHEREAS**, Ellis is survived by his wife of 46 years, Marcia, whom he met on a tennis court in Evanston; his children Michael, Matthew, and Peter; and his siblings and their families. The Evanston Symphony Orchestra is dedicating its Feb.

12, 2023, concert to Ellis. The program includes Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 2 in G Minor with Irina Muresanu, one of Ellis' favorite soloists, and Mahler's Symphony No. 1, another Ellis favorite.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Commissioners of Cook County, on behalf of the 5.2 million residents of Cook County, honors the life and work of the David Ellis, and herewith expresses its sincere gratitude for the invaluable contributions he has made to the Citizens of Cook County, Illinois; 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 same be tendered to the family of David Ellis.