



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

HONORING KATHLEEN ANNE HEWITT KASTILAHN FOR A LIFE WELL-LIVED

WHEREAS, Kathleen Anne Hewitt Kastilahn died on October 11, less than a month after her 76th birthday. Born in Chicago to Harley and Ruth Hewitt, she attended Lyons Township High School, where she was yearbook editor; and

WHEREAS, Kathy met William (“Bill”) Kastilahn at Northwestern University, while majoring in journalism. Bill noted that both sets of parents dragged them to the University’s Lutheran Center “so we’d know where it was.” After crossing paths for more than a year, the two began a relationship that lasted through 58 years of marriage; and

WHEREAS, after Bill earned a master’s degree in electrical engineering at Stanford in California, the couple then settled into life in Evanston. Their son Will was born in 1975 and Danny in 1979; and

WHEREAS, Kathy began her writing career composing safety manuals for home appliances. Writing for such publications as North Shore Magazine and the Evanston Review, she became a well-known and respected local reporter; and

WHEREAS, in 1992, she began writing for *The Lutheran* magazine. She traveled internationally and wrote on the challenges and celebrations of developing countries. Assignments took her to such highly visible places as Hong Kong and Cannes, as well as countries where people struggled in relative obscurity with poverty and disease. And though she was writing on international issues, she supported local journalism by joining the advisory committee of Evanston RoundTable Media; and

WHEREAS, as an associate editor of *The Lutheran*, she was one of an international group of five who traveled in 2003 to poverty- and famine-worn Zimbabwe to report on Lutheran projects there. President Robert Mugabe, who was attempting to stifle journalism in his country, accused the group of working without proper visas and held them under house arrest for several days; and

WHEREAS, Kathy always bore witness to the dignity of the human spirit - whether in a village high in the Andes, in disaster-torn northern India, or in newly “decolonized” Tanzania. “The poorest people in the world give the most,” she observed on returning from one of her trips. Combining her commitment to social justice and interest in international affairs, she volunteered for more than 20 years at Ten Thousand Villages in Evanston. Helping people closer to home, she also volunteered with the Evanston School Children’s Clothing Association and the Highland Garden Club; and

WHEREAS, her friends numbered in the hundreds, her husband said, noting nearly 1,000 contacts on her phone. Sorority sisters from Kappa Delta at Northwestern, friends from Evanston, and colleagues at *The Lutheran* blended into a river of amity. People warmed to her crisp observations, combined with a gentle wit and a wry but compassionate outlook on the world; and

WHEREAS, Kathy’s contributions to the world will extend beyond her death. A promise made at her last visit to the Mayo Clinic has allowed researchers there to continue to investigate Anti-IgLON5 Disease, which took her life; and

WHEREAS, in addition to her husband and sons, Kathy is survived by her sister, Patricia Hewitt; and four grandchildren: Liam, 16 and Marley, 14 (Will); Louisa, 5 and Otto, 2 (Danny and Susan).

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 Kathleen Ann Hewitt Kastilahn for her many accomplishments and years of service and expresses its sincere appreciation for the work she has done for the residents of Cook County, Illinois and for the residents of the world; 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 Kathleen Ann Hewitt Kastilahn.