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R2012-317

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City Council Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date: 3/14/2012
Sponsor(s): Chandler, Michael D. (24)
Type: Resolution
Title: Tribute to late Otis Leavill-Cobb
Committee(s) Assignment:

A TRIBUTE TO OTIS LEAVILL-COBB

WHEREAS, Otis Leavill-Cobb, a most beloved citizen, friend and towering talent in the music business, lived in Chicago's great twenty-fourth ward all of his life. He was born on February 8, 1937 in Dewey Rose, GA to Clarence and Ruby Cobb. The family moved to Chicago's Lawndale community two years later; and

WHEREAS, Otis Leavill-Cobb was one of the first to broadcast on the radio when he formed the Cobb Singers. His childhood friendships blossomed into life-long brotherhood with the likes of Major Lance, Curtis Mayfield and Jerry Butler; and

WHEREAS, Otis and Major participated in amateur boxing at St. Albees as teenagers. At that time they formed a group called the Floats with two female singers, including Barbara Tyson. Although that group never released a record, their demo is still floating around Chi-town; and

WHEREAS, Otis Leavill-Cobb's first record "Ride Sally Ride" dropped on Mercury's Limelight subsidiary. He said he had waxed for St. Lawrence Records, but they evidently leased the master. His next release was "Gotta Right To Cry" on Lucky Records. It was a Mayfield song that had already been released in 1963 by his chum Lance; and

WHEREAS, Otis' third release "Let Her Love Me" in 1966 gave his career the boost it needed, reaching number 31 on Billboard's R&B Chart. This ballad was also created by Curtis Mayfield with the Impressions singing in the background. It was the first national hit for Blue Rock Records. Disk jockeys were spinning this hit so much that Dick Clark gave Otis a paid slot to sing two songs on his tour with the Dick Clark Caravan of Stars; and

WHEREAS, Otis Leavill-Cobb would later work for Carl Davis at Okeh Records, scheduling artists and getting musicians and backing singers to the studio. Leavill could spot talent! he discovered the Chi-Lites, Tyrone Davis, Bohannon, Barbara Acklin, Windycity and Signey Joe Quall. He also discovered The Lost Generation and Manchild from Indianapolis, whose members included Kenneth "Baby Face" Edmonds; and

WHEREAS, Otis moved with Carl Davis to the Dakar label, where he served as Vice President. He later recorded for Dakar, enjoying his biggest hit "I Love You" that topped at number 10 on the R&B charts. He continued his success with "Love Uprising" and followed it with "There's Nothing Better Than Loving You"; and

WHEREAS, Otis Leavill-Cobb became more prominent behind the scenes than in front and continued to work with artists like Major Lance, Gene Chandler and Tyrone Davis. He was a songwriter for BMI with 41 songs to his credit. In 1999, Otis toured the European clubs with the Dells. His memories of music were all good. He partnered with his friend Kerry Young in 2000, forming OK Records, where Gus Redmond served as their Promotional Director; and

WHEREAS, Otis ventured into other business opportunities throughout his life including Buddy Bear Food Market and Star Planet Television. He partnered with Carl Davis to coach the football team at Hyde Park High for seven years. Otis managed the '76 Car Wash & Gas Station at Washington and Pulaski and even moonlighted as a Maywood police officer; and

WHEREAS, God in His infinite wisdom chose, July 17, 2002, to bring His precious son, Otis Leavill-Cobb to his heavenly reward. At 65, He never lost his drive, hustle or energy; and

WHEREAS, The Otis L. Cobb Foundation has been formed to continue the legacy of Otis and his Five P's to Perfection: "Proper Preparation Prevents Poor Performance". This new foundation will focus on educating and mentoring persons in the Lawndale community who want to pursue careers in the music industry; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, gathered here 14TH day of March, 2012, do hereby offer our best wishes to family and friends of Otis Leavill-Cobb as they embark on the task of creating a great foundation worthy of his memory; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and presented to the family of Otis Leavill-Cobb.



MICHAEL D. CHANDLER
ALDERMAN, 24TH WARD

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