



City of Chicago



R2016-23

Office of the City Clerk

Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date: 1/13/2016
Sponsor(s): Emanuel (Mayor)
Type: Resolution
Title: Tribute to late Vanessa Ann Rich
Committee(s) Assignment:

CONS.



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

RAHM EMANUEL
MAYOR

January 13, 2016

TO THE HONORABLE, THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I transmit herewith a resolution honoring the life and memory of Vanessa Rich.

Your favorable consideration of this resolution will be appreciated.

Very truly yours,

Mayor



RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, With profound sadness and an overwhelming sense of loss, the Members of this Chamber mourn the death, on December 27, 2015, at age 64, of Vanessa Ann Rich, Chicago's Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Family and Support Services ("DFSS"), and a fierce advocate for our City's Head Start and Early Head Start programs; and

WHEREAS, Born on October 30, 1951 in Monmouth, Illinois, Ms. Rich received her Master of Arts Degree from Western Illinois University in Macomb, Illinois. She began her distinguished career in early childhood education in the summer of 1965 as a volunteer teen intern for the newly created Head Start Program. This transformative experience set the stage for her life's work as a champion for Head Start and the children and families it benefitted; and

WHEREAS, Driven by a fervent belief in the value of quality early learning, and by a passion to expand access to critical early learning services to all children and families, Ms. Rich quickly earned her reputation as a formidable leader and fearless advocate for early childhood education. She religiously wore a pin on her jacket that read "Head Start Works"; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Rich joined the City on September 1, 2004, where she initially assisted in overseeing Chicago's Head Start Grant. Later, as deputy commissioner of DFSS, Ms. Rich was responsible for the oversight, policy development and implementation of Chicago's Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Along with her team, she successfully managed four Triennial Head Start Reviews in 2005, 2008, 2011 and 2014. Her tireless efforts were a major contributing factor to the success of these reviews; and

WHEREAS, Under Ms. Rich's guiding hand, Chicago's Head Start and Early Head Start programs earned national recognition, and access to quality early learning was expanded to thousands of our City's most vulnerable children and families; and

WHEREAS, Especially committed to helping children and families living in poverty, Ms. Rich believed in taking a comprehensive approach to expanding opportunities and providing hope to generations of young learners and their families. Throughout her career, Ms. Rich encouraged and embraced Head Start's holistic approach to helping people, through quality education, to succeed in life. "In Head Start," she said, "we don't just stand on the porch, we come all the way into the house"; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Rich's many and varied professional accomplishments bear witness to her unwavering commitment to promoting and expanding early childhood education. In addition to serving as chairman of the board of the National Head Start Association, Ms. Rich served at various times as president of the Illinois Head Start Association; as director of Hope Head Start in Galesburg, Illinois; as dean of adult education at Chicago's Wilbur Wright College; as a

visiting professor at the Head Start Management Academy; as an adjunct professor at Northwestern University, Knox College and Loyola University's Erickson Institute; as a partner and senior consultant for Center Circle, Inc.; and as an appointed member of the Health Systems Planning Agency. During her storied 50-year career, Ms. Rich presented hundreds of training sessions to public and private clients on cultural diversity, gender diversity and management. A prolific writer, Ms. Rich published several articles, developed instructional text, and is one of the contributing authors of the "Youth Empowerment" curriculum; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Rich has received numerous acknowledgements and awards for her work in the field of childhood education, including the Who's Who Regional Federated Women's Club and Father Augustine Tolton Black Catholic Award; and

WHEREAS, An intelligent, witty, strong-willed, patient, kind and vibrant woman, Ms. Rich will always be remembered for her high spirit, infectious smile and boisterous laugh; for her unrivaled contributions to the Head Start program; for the difference she made in the lives of thousands of children and adults throughout her life; for the example she set for all of us to be the perpetual voice for children, particularly those in poverty; and as a truly marvelous woman whose strength of character and legacy of love survive in the beautiful family she left behind; and

WHEREAS, Vanessa Ann Rich is survived by her son, Seth Justin Rich; her daughter, Vyctoria Jamie Kranz; her two brothers, Richard and Ronald Hudson; her sister, Crystal Hudson-Jones; her seven grandchildren, Alecia, Brittney, Maritza, James, Zachary, Seth Xavier and Isaiah; one great-granchild, Edwin; many nieces and nephews; and countless admirers and friends; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled this thirteenth day of January, 2016, do hereby honor the life and memory of Vanessa Ann Rich; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be presented to the family of Vanessa Ann Rich as a sign of our sympathy and good wishes.