



City of Chicago



R2021-400

Office of the City Clerk

Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date:	4/21/2021
Sponsor(s):	Burke (14)
Type:	Resolution
Title:	Congratulations extended to Gary T. Johnson on retirement
Committee(s) Assignment:	

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Gary T. Johnson was named the eighth President of the Chicago History Museum ("CHM") in August 2005; and

WHEREAS, The Chicago City Council has been informed of Gary T. Johnson's retirement by Alderman Edward M. Burke; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Johnson was educated at Harvard University (J.D.); Oxford University (Rhodes Scholar; M.A. Modern History); and Yale College (B.A. History and Political Science); and

WHEREAS, Mr. Johnson came to the Museum after 28 years as a lawyer and partner in the Chicago offices of two global law firms, Mayer Brown and Jones Day; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Johnson applied his distinctive creative and managerial skills to enhance the Museum's exhibitions, programs, and services, while simultaneously strengthening its collections, community profile, and fiscal integrity; and

WHEREAS, The museum, founded in 1856, is the oldest cultural institution in the city, and it had retained its original name the Chicago Historical Society, until a name change in 2006 as the Chicago History Museum; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Johnson oversaw a \$27 million fundraising campaign and implemented the Museum's 2006 reinvention, including renovating 75% of its space, and installing the highly praised Exelon Crossroads exhibition, the Museum's foundational overview of Chicago history; and

WHEREAS, During Mr. Johnson's tenure, CHM's annual attendance increased by 89% over a 10-year period and extended school visits to 60,000 students annually; and

WHEREAS, CHM launched a comprehensive education program that brings hands-on history learning into 120 Chicagoland schools in communities throughout the city; and

WHEREAS, Through a two-year pilot workshop program, CHM trained over 3,000 teachers and 200 principals and assistant principals; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Johnson personally taught in over 300 Chicago classrooms over a 10-year period; and

WHEREAS, He managed the successful installation of widely praised special exhibitions including OUT in Chicago, which won the American Alliance of Museum's Award for Excellence; The Ebony Fashion Fair, which won the Costume Society of America's Richard Martin Exhibition Award; and Lincoln and Juarez, Shalom Chicago, and Catholic Chicago; and

WHEREAS, The museum digitalized 424,000 pages of 16 key CHM archives and making them available through 70 research libraries nationwide, 9,300 images from the Hedrich Blessing architectural photography collection, and 3,121 hours of Studs Terkel recordings in order to assist researchers gain access to Museum resources 24/7; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Johnson earned the prestigious National Medal from the Institute of Museums and Library Services, the highest honor of recognition for a Museum in the United States, for being a leader in innovation and accessibility for museums across the country; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Johnson served as the longest tenured President for Museums in the Park, a coalition of Chicago museums located on Chicago Park District property; and

WHEREAS, He grew revenues and awareness for the Museum's prestigious Making History Awards ceremony for eight years in a row, gaining a reputation for fiscal responsibility of the Museum; and

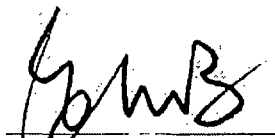
WHEREAS, He completed the landmark five-year \$50 million "This is Chicago" campaign in 2020, which included raising \$11 million for the endowment, acquiring millions of artifacts and important collections like the Chicago Sun-Times, increased education program offerings, and conducting capital improvements such as a renovated theater, student orientation space, outdoor history trail, and upgraded research collection facility; and

WHEREAS, The Museum has named the Gary T. Johnson Chief Historian Chair in honor of Gary's legacy, which the Chief Historian Chair role is reserved for a senior staff person who serves as the lead scholar and Museum spokesperson on matters related to history; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the Mayor and the members of the Chicago City Council, assembled this twenty-first day of April, 2021 congratulate Gary T. Johnson on his retirement and extend gratitude for his contributions to the City of Chicago, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we do hereby designate April 30, 2021 as Gary T. Johnson Day in the City of Chicago; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to Gary T. Johnson.



Edward M. Burke
Alderman, 14th Ward