



Office of the Chicago City
Clerk



R2012-177

Office of the City Clerk

City Council Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date:	2/15/2012
Sponsor(s):	Fioretti, Bob (2)
Type:	Resolution
Title:	Tribute to late Don Cornelius
Committee(s) Assignment:	

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE "SOUL TRAIN" CREATOR DON CORNELIUS

WHEREAS, Don Cornelius, a native of Chicago, was born on September 27, 1936. He lived on the south side in the Bronzeville area and attended DuSable high school, where he graduated in 1954; and

WHEREAS, Don Cornelius proudly served in the U.S. Marines in Korea from 1954-1955. After serving in the war, he came back to Chicago where he later married and had two sons, Anthony and Raymond Cornelius; and

WHEREAS, Don Cornelius worked as an insurance salesman, cartoonist, writer and police officer before becoming a broadcaster; and

WHEREAS, Don Cornelius' entry into broadcasting was fortuitous in that he was discovered by WVON-AM Announcer/News Director Roy Wood when he pulled him over for a traffic violation. Wood loved the quality of his deep voice and invited him to visit the legendary radio station; and

WHEREAS, Don Cornelius was a disc jockey and news anchor at WVON-AM in the mid 1960's and had been hired to use his cool, deep voice to do announcing for WCIU-TV. Additionally, he emceed concerts, record hops, and high school dances around Chicago; and

WHEREAS, In 1970, armed with sharp suits, a mesmerizing voice and \$400 of his own money, Cornelius created "Soul Train", a unique, locally-produced afternoon music and dance television show focusing on African American audiences and entertainers, although it attracted a wide following among all groups. The locally produced program began airing on WCIU-TV (Channel 26) in the afternoon in August 1970, and it was an instant hit. "Soul Train" was taped at WCIU's studios in the Chicago Board of Trade building at 141 W. Jackson in what is now the 2nd Ward; and

WHEREAS, After achieving huge success in Chicago, a Los Angeles-based "Soul Train" premiered in 1971 and went into national syndication, gaining strong ratings across the country and airing a record 35 years; and

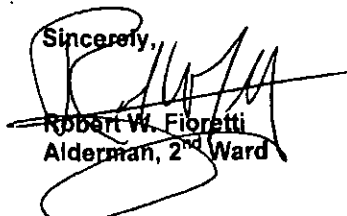
WHEREAS, Don Cornelius produced "Soul Train" and hosted major artists including Jerry ("Iceman") Butler, Aretha Franklin, Smokey Robinson & the Miracles, The Jackson Five, Elton John, Curtis Mayfield, The Chi-Lites and many others, and featured the Soul Train Dancers, with whom he went down the Soul Train Line with Mary Wilson from the Supremes; and

WHEREAS, The 40th anniversary celebration for "Soul Train" traced a remarkable journey here in Chicago, and Don Cornelius was honored with a street marked "Don Cornelius Way", which is located adjacent to the current home of WCIU-TV (Channel 26) at 26 N. Halsted; and

WHEREAS, Don Cornelius will truly be missed, we'll always remember him saying in parting, "We wish you love, peace and soul"; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOVLED, That we, the Mayor and members of the City Of Chicago City Council, gathered together this 15th day of February, 2012, do hereby express our sorrow on the passing of the legendary founder and creator of "Soul Train", Don Cornelius, and extend to his family our deepest sympathy.

BE IT FURTHER ROSOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Don Cornelius.

Sincerely,

Robert W. Fioretti
Alderman, 2nd Ward