



City of Chicago



R2020-108

Office of the City Clerk

Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date:	2/19/2020
Sponsor(s):	King (4) Mitchell (7)
Type:	Resolution
Title:	Tribute to late Lillian G. King
Committee(s) Assignment:	

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION FOR LILLIAN G. KING

WHEREAS, Lillian G. King, community activist and proud, doting mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, passed away on November 21, 2019; and

WHEREAS, The Chicago City Council has been informed of Lillian's passing by the Honorable Sophia D. King, Alderman of the 4th Ward and the Honorable Gregory I. Mitchell, Alderman of the 7th Ward; and

WHEREAS, Lillian Estella Gatewood was born in Louisville, Kentucky on January 14, 1932 to Miller Gatewood and Elnora Sterling; and

WHEREAS, Lillian was an only child, raised in Louisville by her mother, loving aunts and uncles, and her favorite person in the world, her maternal grandmother – “surrounded by love, support, opportunities, attention, and gifts”; and

WHEREAS, In 1951, Lillian left Louisville and moved to Hampton, Virginia to attend Hampton Institute, an historically black college; and

WHEREAS, Lillian was a gifted ballerina, a member of the Hampton dance troupe, and taught ballet to campus children; and

WHEREAS, At Hampton, Lillian met the love of her life, jazz and marching band musician Irving Maurice King, whom she married while they were both students at Hampton; and

WHEREAS, Lillian and Irving had their first child, Karen Rose King, in 1952 before moving to New Haven, Connecticut in 1955 so Irving could attend Yale University Law School where he graduated with honors in 1958; and

WHEREAS, After Irving's graduation from Yale, Lillian and Irving moved their family to the South Side of Chicago, where they had two more children: Michael, born in 1959, and Alan, born in 1963, and where Irving worked a law firm that would eventually bear his name – Cotton, Watt, Jones & King; and

WHEREAS, Lillian and Irving's marriage was truly one for the ages; they were each other's best friends, did almost everything together, shared many mutual passions, including music, the arts, and traveling the world; at the time of Irving's death in 2011, the couple had been married just shy of 60 years; and

WHEREAS, Lillian was an activist who was constantly engaged in the community and charitable causes, and the Civil Rights Movement; she attended the *March on Washington*, where she witnessed Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. deliver his famous “I Have a Dream” speech, and in 1967, due to her activism, the Kings hosted Dr. King at a reception in the their South Side home; and

WHEREAS, Lillian also protested the Vietnam War with Dick Gregory outside of the Democratic National Convention in 1968; and

WHEREAS, In 1972, after two years of serving as Vice President of the Chicago Region Parent Teachers Association, an organization with 100,000 members, Lillian went on to be elected the first black President in the organization's history; and

WHEREAS, Lillian spent much of her time as President working with parents and administrators to desegregate Chicago high schools that had resisted the mandate of *Brown v. Board of Education* for nearly two decades; and

WHEREAS, Lillian held leadership positions in numerous community organizations, including serving as a board member of the South Shore Commission, South Shore Residents Advisory

Board of the South Shore Bank, South Shore Cultural Center Advisory Council, South Shore YMCA, the Mayor's Committee on School Board Nominations, Woodlawn Urban Progress Center, the Chicago Urban League Women's Board, and many others; and

WHEREAS, In the 1970s, Lillian led a successful movement that saved the South Shore Country Club from demolition, which led to the facility being renamed the South Shore Cultural Center, and opened its admissions to African Americans and Jewish people; and

WHEREAS, During this decade Lillian also started a South Shore community safety program called *Whistlestop*, through which Lillian distributed 5,000 safety whistles and spoke to over 100 block clubs, churches, schools, and other organizations; and

WHEREAS, In the 1980s, Lillian owned a travel agency called *Far Away Places*, served as Membership Chairman for the 71st Street Merchants Association, and was a founder and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the South Shore Opera Company; and

WHEREAS, Lillian was active in politics and volunteered her time and energy to the candidates she supported, attending Barack Obama's nomination acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention in Denver, Colorado, and a White House event hosted by President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama; and

WHEREAS, Lillian's passions and the commitments she took on did not stop her from being a loving wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother who always talked up her family's accomplishments to anyone who would listen; and


WHEREAS, Lillian lived her life with resolve and on her own terms, bringing warmth and joy to her family and everyone she met; and

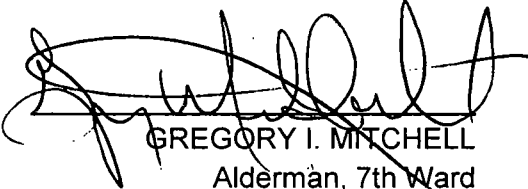
WHEREAS, Lillian is now undoubtedly enjoying a reunion with her daughter, Karen and her beloved Irving, and is once again being spoiled by her grandmother; and

WHEREAS, Lillian is survived and loved by her sons, Michael and Alan King (Sophia); granddaughters, Jamie Thompson (Kevin), Alexis, and Akili King; great-granddaughter Kailen Thompson, great-grandson Kade Thompson; and her many loving nieces and nephews; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, gathered here this nineteenth day of February, 2020, do hereby extend our most heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of Lillian G. King; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and presented to the family of Lillian G. King as a sign of our honor and respect.


SOPHIA D. KING
Alderman, 4th Ward


GREGORY I. MITCHELL
Alderman, 7th Ward

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