



City of Chicago



R2017-684

Office of the City Clerk

Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date: 7/26/2017

Sponsor(s): Tunney (44)
Cappleman (46)
Mell (33)
Lopez (15)
Ramirez-Rosa (35)

Type: Resolution

Title: Tribute to late Chuck Renslow by City Council LGBT Caucus

Committee(s) Assignment:

Comment

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Chuck Renslow, 87, a longtime pillar of the LGBTQ community in Chicago and around the world, died on Thursday, June 29, 2017 after multiple long-term health issues; and,

WHEREAS, The Chicago City Council has been informed of his passing by the City Council LGBT Caucus; and,

WHEREAS, Renslow was born in Chicago in 1929, raised in the Logan Square neighborhood by his grandmother, and graduated from Lane Technical High School; and,

WHEREAS, In the early 1950s, Renslow founded Kris Studios, one of the earliest and most durable of the physique photography houses. He was an accomplished photographer, including of the ballet. His dance photography is in the Newberry Library in the Chuck Renslow Dance Photographs collection; and,

WHEREAS, In 1958, he was brought to a local court for the distribution and possession of material with "excessive genital delineation." Unlike some gays, Renslow did not passively wait for a conviction. He and his attorneys fought back, including as evidence nude statues in Chicago. In 1964, the Post Office also brought Kris Studios up on charges of pornography. The studios did not use the more common strategy of saying the materials were art; they just denied they were pornography, and the judge agreed that the human body itself, in posing straps, was not porn; and,

WHEREAS, He opened Gold Coast, believed to be the first leather bar in the U.S., in Chicago in 1958. It closed in 1987, when it was known internationally as the oldest leather establishment in the world; and,

WHEREAS, He was the founder of many bars and sex clubs since the 1960s including Man's Country, which is still open in Andersonville. In the 1970s, the bathhouse attracted top names on the "K-Y circuit."; and,

WHEREAS, He was the publisher of Triumph, Mars and Rawhide Male magazines, publications mailed and shared across the country as the earliest ways gay men found each other. In 1965, he was a founder of Second City Motorcycle Club, the first such club not on the West Coast; and,

WHEREAS, Renslow also was involved in newspapers, purchasing GayLife newspaper from its founder, Grant Ford, and publishing it for several years, until it folded in 1986; and,

WHEREAS, In 1979, he founded International Mr. Leather, which grew out of his Mr. Gold Coast contest and the experience he had managing A.A.U. physique competitions. Renslow and Tony DeBlase co-founded the Leather Archives & Museum in 1991. Renslow served as president for many years; and,

WHEREAS, Organizations he was involved in included Strike Against AIDS, Human Rights Campaign Fund, Metropolitan Business Association, Illinois Gay and Lesbian Task Force, National Organization for Women, American Civil Liberties Union, NAACP, Chicago Association of Commerce and Industry, Uptown Chamber of Commerce, 46th Ward Advisory Council and the 48th Ward Democratic Party Advisory Board; and,

WHEREAS, He served on the board of directors of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and was a U.S. representative to what was known then as the International Lesbian and Gay Association; and,

WHEREAS, Renslow was especially active in politics in the 1970s and 1980s, as the gay community gained clout. He was the founder of Prairie State Democratic Club in 1980, and they hosted events with top politicians from Chicago and Cook County, and even presidential candidates coming through the area. He pushed for the gay and lesbian civil-rights ordinance when it was first introduced in the City Council in the early 1970s, and the initial executive order banning discrimination in Chicago city government, as issued by Mayor Jane Byrne; and,

WHEREAS, Renslow was inducted into the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame in 1991 and received dozens of awards from the gay and leather communities. He received The Leather Journal's lifetime achievement award and a Centurion Award as Leatherman of the Century; and,

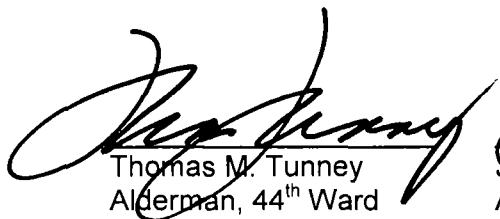
WHEREAS, Renslow is survived by his partner of 36 years, Ron Ehemann, and two adopted sons, Robert Wilke and Patrick Corcoran; and,

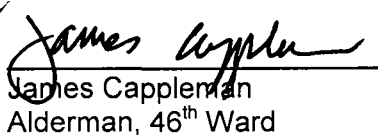
WHEREAS, on Wednesday, August 2, 2017, at Jefferson Masonic Temple, a masonic funeral ritual will be held and, on Sunday, August 27, 2017, the 36th and final White Party will be held at Metro, opening with a memorial celebrating Chuck Renslow; and,

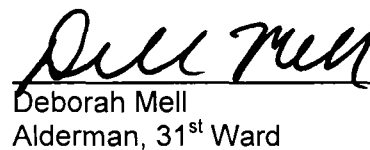
WHEREAS, throughout his life and career, Chuck Renslow served as an exemplary leader to LGBT and Leather communities in Chicago and beyond and as a model activist for social justice; now therefore,

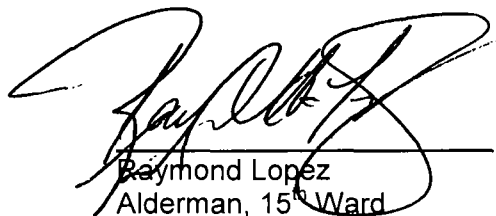
BE IT RESOLVED that we, the Mayor and members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled this 26th day of July 2017, do hereby honor the life and memory of Chuck Renslow and extend our heartfelt condolences to his family and friends; and,

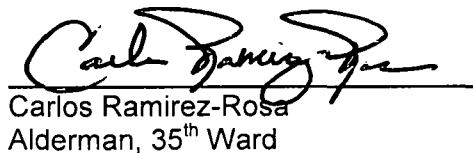
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Chuck Renslow, International Mister Leather, Inc. and the Leather Archives and Museum.


Thomas M. Tunney
Alderman, 44th Ward


James Capplemen
Alderman, 46th Ward


Deborah Mell
Alderman, 31st Ward


Raymond Lopez
Alderman, 15th Ward


Carlos Ramirez-Rosa
Alderman, 35th Ward