



City of Chicago



R2022-805

Office of the City Clerk

Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date:	7/20/2022
Sponsor(s):	Ervin (28)
Type:	Resolution
Title:	Congratulations extended to Brenetta Howell Barrett on 90th birthday
Committee(s) Assignment:	

RESOLUTION CELEBRATING BRENETTA HOWELL BARRETT'S 90TH BIRTHDAY

WHEREAS, Brenetta Howell Barrett, noted Chicagoan and legendary civic activist for more than seven decades, celebrated her 90th birthday on June 28, 2022 and will be honored at a "90 YEARS YOUNG" community recognition celebration on July 9, 2022 ; and

WHEREAS, The Chicago City Council has been informed of these joyous occasions by the Honorable Jason Ervin, Alderman of the 28th Ward; and

WHEREAS, Brenetta Howell Barrett is a dedicated woman of service, unashamedly African-American, a focused social activist with exceptional civic vision who has provided leadership to Chicago's West Side neighborhoods and residents, the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois and beyond, during several transformative periods, and who has greatly contributed to the spread of an activist model of multi-cultural integration through intensive community outreach and service; and

WHEREAS, Brenetta Howell Barrett, whose adult life's work has been primarily centered on Chicago's West and Near West Sides, was born in Chicago as the eldest of seven daughters in a close-knit family, was raised in the historic South Side Bronzeville neighborhood, where she attended Forrestville Elementary and DuSable High school; She is the divorced mother of three daughters and a son, two whom are deceased (the late Viveca Lynne Howell, a Chicago Public Schools teacher, and Kevin Lawrence Howell, a Navy veteran and licensed cosmetologist who worked in the construction field) – a grandmother, great-grandmother, great-great grandmother AND a surrogate mother-figure to numerous individuals. Surviving children include Cynthia T. Henderson, M.D., MPH and Abiiba Howell, a Houston-based filmmaker and producer; and

WHEREAS, Brenetta Howell Barrett has dedicated her life to the pursuit of racial, economic, educational and social equality, professional excellence, community activism and service – including nearly four decades' active membership at Third Unitarian Church of Chicago; a founding member/vice president of the West Side Branch NAACP; she has been involved in many historic local and national marches, rallies, political campaigns – including late Mayor Harold Washington's and former President Barack Obama's elections as Chicago's 1st Black Mayor and the nation's first Black Chief Executive, respectively. Today, **Brenetta** continues to actively participate in, and support Voting rights, Reproductive Health, LGBTQ rights, Black & Minority Economics, Black Lives Matter, Equality for Women, Affordable Housing and Health Care Equity; and

WHEREAS, Brenetta Howell Barrett is multi-faceted and also multi-talented. She was a prolific former journalist and served as reporter, columnist, and West Side editor for the *Chicago Defender*, the *Citizen*, the *New Crusader*, *Muhammad Speaks*, *West Side Booster* (Associate Editor), and other African-American news publications. She's also run nonprofit organizations. At other times, she was a cabinet member in the administration of former Illinois Governor Dan Walker, and headed the Governor's Office of Human Resources (umbrella agency for the state's Model Cities, Economic Opportunity, Minority Business Enterprise, and Developmental Disabilities Offices). She served as schedule director and campaign vice chairperson for the 1st mayoral campaign of then-Congressman Harold Washington in 1977 and was a key advisor during his successful 1983 Mayoral campaign. Mayor Harold Washington later appointed her Commissioner of the Department of Consumer Services, Chicago's lead agency for environmental protection and food safety; and

Brenetta also successfully managed Congressman Augustus "Gus" Savage's 1980 campaign, among others. She was the Illinois Chairperson of the Shirley Chisholm for President Committee, and the only Illinois Chisholm delegate to the 1972 Democratic National Convention. She has run for office, including a 1964 trailblazing congressional race, encouraging other Black women to seek public office; and

WHEREAS, Upon continually hearing and answering the '*Clarion Call of Community Service*', **Brenetta Howell Barrett** currently serves or has served as an advisor, officer, or board member for a broad range of organizations and institutions; She was recently elected Member-at-Large to the Community Service Council of the Paul Simon Chicago Job Corps, and has been a volunteer with Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly for the past 29 years; and she was recently named to the Board of Directors of Bobby E. Wright Comprehensive Behavioral Health Center Inc. and

In 1998 ever-evolving **Brenetta** founded, and continues to serve as President, and Chief Executive Officer of Pathfinders Prevention Education Fund. Pathfinders provides HIV/AIDS prevention, education, and advocacy services for Chicago's West Side and near-western suburbs; in recognition of her long-time support, **Brenetta** was inducted into the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame as a Friend of the Community; and

WHEREAS, Throughout her years of speaking, teaching, and reaching, **Brenetta Howell Barrett** is respected for taking her 'social ministry of service' directly to the streets – into the bustling heart of her urban community; **Brenetta** was responsible for apprising the media of the concerns of Blacks and other minorities, including equity and parity in hiring and decision-making, banking in Black and minority owned banks, and the use of Black and other minority products and services; and

WHEREAS, As she celebrates this milestone birthday, **Brenetta Howell Barrett** never forgets the importance of working diligently to share the good news of a proud legacy, despite persistent challenges to the strong cultural traditions in the African-American community, to ensure that the powerful identity of hard work and faithful service are never ignored, trivialized, or suppressed; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the **Mayor** and members of the **City Council of the City of Chicago**, gathered here this Twentieth day of July, 2022, do hereby congratulate **Brenetta Howell Barrett** on her **90th YEARS YOUNG** birthday, salute her for her inclusive philosophy and selfless civic activism for over seven decades, and extend to this outstanding citizen our very best wishes for continued professional success, personal peace and joy, and the realization of justice for all

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and presented to **Brenetta Howell Barrett** as a sign of our esteem, honor, and respect.



JASON C. ERVIN
Alderman, 28th Ward