



City of Chicago



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Meeting Date:

6/17/2020

Sponsor(s):

Harris (8)

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Resolution

Title:

Tribute to late Dr. Conrad Walter Worrill

Committee(s) Assignment:

A City Council Resolution Honoring The Life of Dr. Conrad Walter Worrill

WHEREAS, Almighty God in His infinite wisdom and judgment has called Dr. Conrad Walter Worrill, an outstanding citizen of the 8th Ward and the City of Chicago, to his everlasting reward on June 3, 2020; and

WHEREAS, This August Chicago City Council body has been informed of his passing by the Honorable Michelle A. Harris, Alderman of the 8th Ward; and

WHEREAS, Conrad Walter Worrill was born on August 15, 1941, in Pasadena, California. His mother, Anna Bell, was the first African American to sing in the Pasadena Philharmonic Orchestra and his father, Walter, was a college-educated YMCA manager. Dr. Conrad Worrill became an activist and scholar whose goal is to advance the cause and concept of African independence and self-determination both in the United States and internationally; and

WHEREAS, After moving to Chicago on his ninth birthday, Dr. Worrill became serious about athletics. He gained his first racial consciousness through competitive swimming when his black YMCA team faced serious heckling. In 1962, he was drafted into the Army and shipped to Okinawa, Japan. While overseas, he read profusely about African American history, culture and politics. After he returned to Chicago in 1963, Dr. Worrill attended George Williams College, but became radicalized by the Black Power movement. After graduating in 1968, a West Side YMCA hired him as the program director. He earned his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He headed George Williams College's Urban Institute in 1973 and began teaching at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago in 1976, where he was the coordinator and professor of Inner City Studies Education; and

WHEREAS, While organizing in 1983 to elect Chicago's first black mayor, Harold Washington, Dr. Worrill co-founded the Task Force for Black Political Empowerment. As the national chairman of the National Black United Front (NBUF), he worked aggressively to change the American public school curriculum to be inclusive of the contributions of Africans and African Americans; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Worrill was the elected economic development commissioner of the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA). He served as special consultant of field operations for the historic Million Man March/ Day of Absence on October 16, 1995, in Washington, D.C. As part of the fight to win reparations for the American descendants of slaves, he traveled to Geneva, Switzerland, in 1997 with a delegation to formally charge the U.S. Government with genocide and human right violations before the Commission on Human Rights. The delegation presented the commission with a "Declaration of Genocide by the United States Government Against the Black Population in the United States" with 157,000 signatures; and

WHEREAS, Upon returning to the United States, Worrill presented this petition to the United Nations in New York City. In 2001, he led a 400-member delegation to the UN World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa. He wrote the syndicated weekly column "Worrill's World," which is widely read in African American newspapers across the country. In August 2002, Worrill organized a national reparations rally attended by thousands; and

WHEREAS, As a high school and college athlete, Dr. Worrill remained a sports enthusiast, He was a chronicler of the history and origin of the game of basketball and the historical and evolutionary role Black people have contributed to the development of the game, He was working with the Friends of Track and Field to help revitalize track and field in the Chicago Public Schools as an alternative athletic activity in which young people can be encouraged to participate; and

WHEREAS, One of Dr. Worrill's greatest passions has always been the relationship of athletics to academic achievement, character building, and preparation for life's long journey; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Conrad Worrill was the driving force in the building of the Gately Indoor Track and Field Facility, only the second of its kind in the United States, which was completed shortly before his passing; and

WHEREAS, His life's work demonstrated his commitment to doing what proverbial African wisdom characterizes as "good speech – speaking truly and doing right"; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Worrill's family celebrates his love, his kindness, his resilience, and his indefatigable spirit. He will be remembered by his wife, Talibah, daughters, Femi Worrill; Sobenna Worrill; Michelle Worrill; Kimberley Aisha King; and a host of family, friends and colleagues; and

THEREFORE, Be It Resolved, That we, the Mayor and members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, do hereby express our deep sorrow on the passing of Dr. Conrad Walter Worrill, and extend to his family our sincere condolences; and

Be It Further Resolved, That a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and presented to the family of Dr. Conrad Walter Worrill.



Michelle A. Harris
Alderman, 8th Ward