



# City of Chicago



**R2018-192**

Office of the City Clerk

## Document Tracking Sheet

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	2/28/2018
<b>Sponsor(s):</b>	Dowell (3)
<b>Type:</b>	Resolution
<b>Title:</b>	Tribute to late Judge William Cousins, Jr.
<b>Committee(s) Assignment:</b>	

# **A Resolution Honoring the Life of the Honorable Judge William Cousins Jr.**

**WHEREAS**, It is with great sadness that the members of this Chamber learned of the death of the Honorable Judge William Cousins Jr. on January 20, 2018 at the age of 90; and

**WHEREAS**, William Cousins Jr. was born on October 29, 1927 in a small town outside of Swiftown, Mississippi. His family moved to Memphis, Tennessee around the age of 5 before coming to Chicago where he graduated from DuSable High School in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward; and

**WHEREAS**, Judge Cousins went on to graduate with honors from the University of Illinois in 1948 with a degree in political science and then later attended Harvard Law School where he received his LL.B. in 1951; and

**WHEREAS**, Judge Cousins honorably served his country as an infantry lieutenant in the Army from 1951 to 1953 and while on his tour of duty met his wife Hiroko in Matsushima, Japan at an officers' party; and

**WHEREAS**, After his deployment, Judge Cousins remained as an active army reservist for 20 years while he embarked on his distinguished career as an attorney, starting with a job with the Chicago Title and Trust Company. He then served as a Republican Assistant State's Attorney where he worked until his return to private practice with the law firm of Turner, Cousins, Gavin and Watt, and in 1967 Cousins won his first of many elections when he became the Alderman of Chicago's 8<sup>th</sup> Ward; and

**WHEREAS**, Elected as an independent "Free Democratic" alderman, he was able to represent his constituents free from the constraints of Chicago's political machine; and

**WHEREAS**, In 1976 Judge Cousins began his judicial career after winning a judgeship in the Circuit Court of Cook County and over the next 26 years, Judge Cousins presided over the Illinois Appellate Court and the Cook County Circuit Court; and

**WHEREAS**, Some of his proudest achievements as a judge include his ruling that found Illinois' death penalty unconstitutional, his mentorship of other black judges, and his work in retirement on probes into the 2003 E2 nightclub tragedy and the deadly fire in the Cook County Administration Building that same year; and

**WHEREAS**, Judge Cousins remained active in the community through his work with Chicago Area Planned Parenthood Association, Operation Push, Kappa Alpha Psi and Sigma Pi Phi Fraternities, and was a member of Trinity United Church of Christ; and

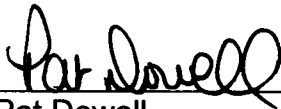
**WHEREAS**, For his outstanding contributions to the legal profession, Judge Cousins was inducted into the halls of fame for the National Bar Association, the Cook County Bar Association and DuSable High School; and

**WHEREAS**, Judge Cousins was a dedicated family man who was married to Hiroko for 52 years before her passing in 2005 and is survived by his four children: Cheryl, Noel, Yul and Gail and four grandchildren; and

**WHEREAS**, Judge Cousins was a transformative figure for the African-American community, rising to the highest ranks of his profession during a time where oppression of the black community was commonplace. Despite all obstacles, Judge Cousins achieved great things both professionally and personally, and did so with a warm heart and uncompromising ethics. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family and friends of Judge Cousins during this difficult time; now, therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED**, That we, the Mayor and the Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago gathered here in assembly this 28<sup>th</sup> Day of February, 2018 A.D., do hereby offer our sincerest condolences to the family of the Honorable Judge William Cousins Jr.; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and presented to the family of Judge William Cousins Jr.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pat Dowell", is written over a horizontal line.

Pat Dowell  
Alderman, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward