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CONS.



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

RICHARD M. DALEY
MAYOR

February 9, 2011

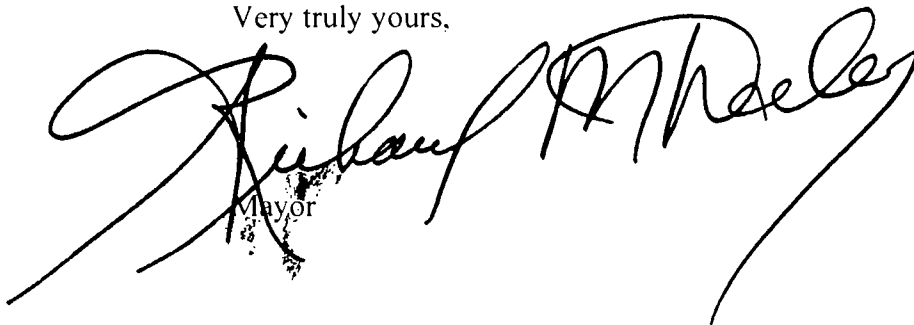
TO THE HONORABLE, THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I transmit herewith a resolution honoring the life and memory of Katherine I. Higginbottom.

Your favorable consideration of this resolution will be appreciated.

Very truly yours,


Mayor

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The Members of this Chamber were deeply saddened to learn of the death on December 17, 2010, at age 87, of Katherine I. Higginbottom, a local entrepreneur, homemaker and respected citizen of the City of Chicago; and

WHEREAS, Born in Pembroke Township, Kankakee County, Illinois on November 20, 1923, Mrs. Higginbottom was the eldest child of Ulysses and Pearl Skaggs. One of thirteen children, Mrs. Higginbottom grew up in a poor farm community in Hopkins Park, Illinois; and

WHEREAS, A sickly child, Mrs. Higginbottom was raised by her maternal grandparents, Ellen and William Tetter. The apple of her grandparents' eyes, Mrs. Higginbottom had a happy childhood on her grandparents' farm, where she tended to her pet pig, milked cows, picked blueberries, cut out paper dolls, played mumblety peg with a pocket knife and loved to watch her grandfather mount his horse, Mamie. As an adult, Mrs. Higginbottom fondly recalled lying on the back of a horse – head to rump – blowing the heads off of dandelions as she looked up at the sky; and

WHEREAS, Coming of age during the Great Depression, Mrs. Higginbottom's adolescent years were fraught with tragedy and hardship. Three of her siblings died in infancy from illnesses complicated by malnutrition. When she turned 13, Mrs. Higginbottom's parents moved to Chicago Heights in search of a better life and took their young daughter Katherine with them. Mrs. Higginbottom never forgot that wrenching separation from her beloved grandparents; and

WHEREAS, As a student at St. Anne's High School in St. Anne, Illinois, Mrs. Higginbottom struggled with poverty and discrimination. An avid reader, whose family owned only a few books, Mrs. Higginbottom read Jack London's "White Fang" over and over again. At lunchtime, Mrs. Higginbottom would eat her daily meal of dried biscuits in the school's bathroom so that the other children would not make fun of her meager lunch. Head held high, Mrs. Higginbottom marched down the graduation aisle without a partner. A white classmate refused to walk next to her because she was black; and

WHEREAS, It was on a double date with her sister Irma and the two Higginbottom brothers that Katherine met her future husband, Elzie Higginbottom Sr. A reluctant participant in this venture, Katherine elbowed Irma repeatedly throughout the evening, proclaiming that she would rather be home reading a good book. Despite Katherine's initial reservations, the evening proved to be a tremendous success. Both couples eventually married, producing two families of double cousins; and

WHEREAS, A tenacious and industrious woman, Mrs. Higginbottom worked for a short time as a maid for Essie Kupcinec, the wife of famed *Sun-Times* columnist Irv Kupcinec. During World War II, Mrs. Higginbottom was hired to stack rounds of mortar at the Joliet Arsenal in Joliet, Illinois, and was quickly promoted to a clerical position. During this time, Katherine and her husband opened a small produce store in Chicago Heights. In 1956, at Katherine's urging,

the couple purchased a building in Chicago and opened the Morgan Park Laundromat at 1258 W. 111th Street. The laundromat is still in operation today; and

WHEREAS, A savvy businesswoman and exceptional role model for her family, Mrs. Higginbottom balanced the demands of family and career with unparalleled ease and grace. She attended every one of her son Elzie Jr.'s track meets and all of her son Eric's plays. Mrs. Higginbottom had one commandment in her house: that her two children get a good education; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Higginbottom's home in Chicago's Roseland neighborhood was a haven for her family and friends. Well known for her cooking, Mrs. Higginbottom's delicious fried chicken and potato salad were unsurpassed. A doting grandmother, Mrs. Higginbottom loved nothing more than to sit with her grandchildren in her lovely garden, surrounded by peonies, her favorite flower, where she would chat with the children for hours on end about farm animals and their other favorite topics; and

WHEREAS, A kind, gracious, intelligent and hard-working person, possessed of an easygoing manner, sunny disposition, vibrant spirit and inimitable style, Mrs. Katherine I. Higginbottom will always be remembered as a wife, mother and grandmother *par excellence*, and as a woman whose strength of character and legacy of love survive in the beautiful family she left behind; and

WHEREAS, Katherine I. Higginbottom was predeceased by Elzie Higginbottom Sr., her husband of 60 years, and is survived by her two sons, Elzie Jr. and Eric; six of her thirteen siblings, Vivian Lee, Madaline Skaggs Graves, Roy Skaggs, Kenneth Skaggs, Joan C. Wells and Sandra Sangster; and her four grandchildren, William, Carter, Caroline and Parker; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled this ninth day of February, 2011, do hereby honor the life and memory of Katherine I. Higginbottom and extend our heartfelt condolences to her family; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Katherine I. Higginbottom as a sign of our sympathy and good wishes.