



City of Chicago



R2018-1300

Office of the City Clerk

Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date: 12/12/2018

Sponsor(s): Harris (8)
Scott, Jr. (24)

Type: Resolution

Title: Tribute to late Reverend James Bass

Committee(s) Assignment:

A Resolution Celebrating the Life of Rev. James Bass An 'Original Spiritual Godfather' of the Black Church

WHEREAS, Almighty God in His infinite wisdom and judgment has called the earthly soul Reverend James Bass, a great citizen and friend, to his everlasting reward in the Kingdom of Heaven. As he departed life, Rev. Bass recently left his earthly home, walking up the golden stairway to his eternal home, and joined his family; and

WHEREAS, Rev. James Bass, who faithfully and formerly served as the longtime Pastor of Chicago's Historic Mount Olive Baptist Church in Chicago's Austin community, passed away of natural causes after living on this earth for 98 incredible years. Rev. Bass made his transition at a Chicago area hospice facility on Tuesday, November 27th, 2018; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Bass joyously entered into the world nearly a century ago, and was the oldest son in a close-knit family of six children, born to the union of Frank and Hattie B. Bass, in Florence, MS. James (affectionately known as Rev. Bass), had five siblings: 4 brothers (Harry, J.C., Sylvester and Charles) and one sister (Mamie), were raised on the Dockery Plantation near Ruleville, MS. His parents and all of his siblings preceded him in death; and

WHEREAS, Rev. James Bass joined the entire Bass family as dedicated members of Mt. Laton Baptist Church in Ruleville, MS., where James officially connected and accepted Christ at the early age of 9. Rev. Bass attended the Rules School and graduated from Booker T. Washington High School in 1941; and

WHEREAS, A proud Veteran of World War II, Rev. James Bass was drafted into the United States Army during World War II on December 7, 1941 - - the exact date that the U.S. Naval base at Pearl Harbor (Hawaii) was infamously attacked by Japan. James patriotically served his country with honor and distinction, including two years in the states, then fourteen months overseas, including the South Pacific and New Guinea. James, well-known for his preaching ability, was called and authorized as a chaplain to conduct worship services in the field and camp headquarters. He received several meritorious awards and honors, including the prestigious Good Conduct Medal, Battle and Service, before being honorably discharged in June 1945; and

WHEREAS, In 1956 Rev. Bass relocated to Chicago, and organized Mt. Olive Baptist Church, where he pastored for 45 years, before retiring at age 81. In 1967 Rev. Bass met, courted and married the love of his life, the former Helen Julius. To this union two children were born, a son - Vincent, and a daughter - Vikkeda. In 2003 Rev. Bass and family were blessed with the arrival of a grandson, Jamie Bass; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Bass was known as a strong spiritual soldier on the battlefields of civil rights and economic justice in Chicago. During the 1960s it was Rev. James Bass who courageously fought against the wishes of the white community and indeed many other African-American clergy, by allowing Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to speak at Mount Olive, withstanding many death threats in the process. In 1965, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. launched a civil rights open housing campaign here in Chicago. Rev. Bass hosted an open meeting at Pulaski and Lexington, introducing Dr. King to the Westside. Rev. Bass also worked closely with Operation Bread Basket and Rainbow PUSH Coalition founder Rev. Jesse Jackson; and

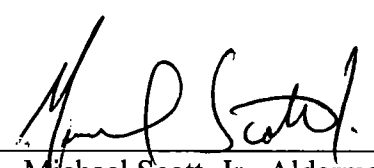
THEREFORE, Be It Resolved, That we, the Mayor and members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, gathered here in assembly this twelfth day of December, 2018, A.D., do hereby express our sorrow on the passing of Rev. James Bass and extend to his family our sincere condolences; and

Be It Further Resolved, That a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and presented to the family of Rev. James Bass.

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Michelle A. Harris, Alderman - 8th Ward



Michael Scott, Jr., Alderman - 24th Ward