



# City of Chicago



**R2019-231**

Office of the City Clerk

## Document Tracking Sheet

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	4/10/2019
<b>Sponsor(s):</b>	Laurino (39)
<b>Type:</b>	Resolution
<b>Title:</b>	Congratulations extended to Father Richard James Conyers, C.S.C. on receipt of 'Spirit of Notre Dame' award
<b>Committee(s) Assignment:</b>	

**CONGRATULATIONS FATHER RICHARD JAMES CONYERS, C.S.C., ON RECEIVING THE  
INAUGURAL "SPIRIT OF NOTRE DAME" AWARD**

**WHEREAS**, on Saturday, April 13, 2019, Father Richard James Conyers, C.S.C., will be honored with the inaugural "Spirit of Notre Dame Award", at the 28th Annual Notre Dame College Prep Spirit Gala, in recognition of his exceptional service during his fifty years of priesthood; and

**WHEREAS**, the Chicago City Council has been informed of this special occasion by the Honorable Margaret Laurino, Alderman of the 39th Ward; and

**WHEREAS**, Father Conyers was born to Richard and Rita Boyle Conyers on October 7, 1942 at Holy Cross Hospital on the south side of Chicago. The Conyers family later settled in Round Lake, Illinois in 1946; and

**WHEREAS**, Father Conyers was the second of four children and he fondly recalls a simply and blessed childhood with siblings Carolyn, Colette, and Bill. His father was a union tradesman, an expert at painting, decoration and carpentry and his mother was a school teacher; and

**WHEREAS**, Father Conyers was drawn to his vocation at a very early age. As an eight-year-old boy, he would often make the long two-mile walk to serve at a Holy Hour for Peace. "I felt the call, even then" he says; and

**WHEREAS**, Father Conyers was also strongly influenced by two aunts on his mother's side: Sister Rita Cecile Boyle, who served many years at Regina Dominican Prep School in Wilmette, and Sister Ellenita Boyle, O.P., who taught first grade and served as a principal of multiple schools in the Chicago area. He also counts his grandparents, who lived in the Mt. Greenwood neighborhood of Chicago, as being particularly influential in the development of his faith; and

**WHEREAS**, as a young boy, Father Conyers received his early education at St. Gilbert's school in Grayslake, Illinois and then later at St. Joseph School in Round Lake. In 1956, when it was time for high school, Father Bill McAuliffe, C.S.C., suggested that Father Conyers attend a Vocation Workshop at Holy Cross Seminary in Notre Dame, Indiana. This was the beginning of a lifelong relationship with the Congregation of Holy Cross otherwise, known as Congregatio a Sancta Cruce (C.S.C.), a congregation of missionary priests founded in 1837 by Blessed Basil Moreau, in Le Mans, France; and

**WHEREAS**, following his time at the Holy Cross Seminary, Father Conyers attended Novitiate in Jordan, Minnesota, making his first vows in 1961 and his final vows in 1964; and

**WHEREAS**, Father Conyers continued in his education pursuits and earned a Philosophy degree from the University of Notre Dame in 1965 and, in 1968, a Master's degree in Theology from Holy Cross College in Washington, D.C.; and

**WHEREAS**, fifty years ago, on the 12th of April, 1969, Father Conyers was ordained to the priesthood in Sacred Heart Basilica at University of Notre Dame; and

**WHEREAS**, Father Conyers' first year of ordination was spent at Little Flower parish just next to the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana. It was there that Father Joe Payne C.S.C., an excellent

pastor, preacher and theologian, prepared him thoroughly for ministry, especially in knowing the Sacraments; and

**WHEREAS**, during his two years at Little Flower, Father Conyers was also a chaplain to the Christian Family Movement (CFM), established to support small mentorship and discipleship groups for couples and families. His attributes his experiences with the CFM in helping to deepen his understanding of family life and ministry; and

**WHEREAS**, in the early seventies, Father Conyers moved to New York state to pursue a doctorate in the History of Art and Architecture at SUNY Binghamton. While there he lived at St. Ambrose parish with several priests of the Syracuse diocese. He describes this experience as a “fine grounding to my academic work” and departed after finishing all his coursework, but shy of completing the dissertation; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1973, Father Conyers returned to University of Notre Dame University to serve as a rector of undergraduate students at the University’s Keenan Hall residence. He considers this first ministerial assignment to be the most formative in his priestly life. He remains in touch with many of the students he met during this time. For many, he is the priest they chose to perform their marriages, baptize their children and they still call him and visit when in town for football games. One of his former students has established a Notre Dame College Prep scholarship in Father Conyers’ name; and

**WHEREAS**, Father Conyers recounts thoroughly enjoying the varied pastoral ministry opportunities and campus life while at University of Notre Dame. While there, he even found an outlet for his interest in art history by assisting the University’s Snite Museum of Art with curation and fundraising; and

**WHEREAS**, ten years after arriving back in South Bend, Father Conyers returned to the classroom as a teacher and, in 1983, began a fifteen year teaching career at both Holy Cross College and Saint Mary’s College finding residence in several South Bend parishes during that time; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1997, Holy Cross approached him about a teaching opportunity at Notre Dame High School in Niles, Illinois, which he eventually accepted. This decision began a twenty-one year association with Notre Dame High School and its community; and

**WHEREAS**, Father Conyers quickly found a home at Notre Dame High School, putting his talents to use wherever he was needed. Whether teaching Art or Religion, directing the grounds crew or planning the annual Mardi Gras event, he remained energetic and always very busy; and

**WHEREAS**, When the Midwest Province of Jesuits made the decision to end its association with the Notre Dame High School, all priests were told to find new apostolates and places to live. However, Father Conyers did not feel his time was done there. He asked to stay and was granted permission to remain as the only priest at the High School and he found residence with Queen of All Saints Basilica in the Sauganash neighborhood of Chicago. For the next eleven years, Father Conyers would say the 6:30 AM mass every weekday morning at Queens before traveling the six-and-a-half miles down the road to Notre Dame High School; and

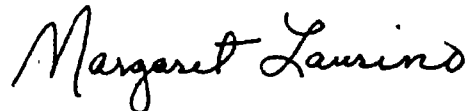
**WHEREAS**, in addition to his many other responsibilities, for many summers, from Memorial Day to Labor Day, Father Conyers has traveled to Corey Lake in Michigan to a YMCA camp to say mass for the

campers and local lake residents, and has built up a large community of people who deeply appreciate his service; and

**WHEREAS**, it is with deep appreciation and respect for the dedicated life of ministry that Father Conyers has exemplified that we joyously celebrate his fiftieth year of service to the thousands of people whose hearts and lives he has touched; now therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled this tenth day of April, 2019, do hereby extend our heartiest congratulations to Father Richard James Conyers for being honored with the inaugural "Spirit of Notre Dame Award" in gratitude his five decades of service and for the way in which he embodies and exemplifies the very best of Notre Dame College Prep; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to Father Richard James Conyers as a sign of our most sincere respect and gratitude.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret Laurino". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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**MARGARET LAURINO**  
Alderman, 39th Ward