



# City of Chicago



R2019-320

Office of the City Clerk

## Document Tracking Sheet

**Meeting Date:** 5/29/2019  
**Sponsor(s):** Burke (14)  
**Type:** Resolution  
**Title:** Tribute to late Reverend John P. Smyth  
**Committee(s) Assignment:**

**WHEREAS**, the Reverend John P. Smyth, ordained as a priest in 1962, and the Executive Director of Maryville Academy, the largest provider of foster care in the State of Illinois until 2004, entered into eternal life on April 16, 2019, at the Loyola University Medical Center in Maywood, Illinois; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Chicago has been informed of his passing by Alderman Edward M. Burke; and

**WHEREAS**, born in Chicago, the Reverend John P. Smyth graduated from DePaul Academy in 1952 and the University of Notre Dame; and

**WHEREAS**, an outstanding collegiate varsity basketball player, the Reverend John P. Smyth captained the Notre Dame squad and was named an honorable mention All-American during his senior year; and

**WHEREAS**, upon completion of his undergraduate studies, the St. Louis Hawks of the National Basketball Association selected him in the first round of the college draft; and

**WHEREAS**, the Reverend John P. Smyth elected to forgo a professional basketball career and entered the seminary instead; and

**WHEREAS**, the Reverend John P. Smyth was ordained a Roman Catholic priest in April 1962, and began his first and only assignment as a priest at Maryville Academy in Des Plaines, Illinois; and

**WHEREAS**, the Reverend John P. Smyth was named Executive Director of Maryville in 1970 during a time of financial crisis at Maryville Academy; and

**WHEREAS**, the Reverend John P. Smyth had dedicated eight years as assistant superintendent before he was put in charge with a mandate to turn around the money-losing institution within one year; and

**WHEREAS**, the physical condition of the Maryville Academy property plant was deemed to be beyond repair; and

**WHEREAS**, the Reverend John P. Smyth raised necessary funding to renovate the campus, replaced the dormitories with group homes, and instituted a program of child care originally developed at Boys Town in Nebraska; and

**WHEREAS**, utilizing his networking abilities and persuasive skills, the Reverend John P. Smyth restored sound fiscal management and succeeded in improving the Maryville Academy infrastructure without the assistance of the Chicago Archdiocese; and

**WHEREAS**, as Executive Director of Maryville Academy, the Reverend John P. Smyth transformed the institution to a more "home-like" and nurturing setting, conducive to the needs and wants of the abused and neglected children residing there; and

**WHEREAS**, during these transformative years, Maryville Academy expanded its mission and vision to specialize in the care of neglected, abused, and abandoned youth; and

**WHEREAS**, Maryville Academy, under the Reverend John P. Smyth's strong guidance and direction, rescued and aided cocaine-addicted newborns; medically complex children; at-risk youth suffering from mental illness and substance abuse problems and damaged children who were the victims of family violence; and

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**WHEREAS**, in January 2004, after completing nearly forty-two years of dedicated service at Maryville Academy, the Reverend John P. Smyth stepped down, assuming the title of Past President while continuing his pastoral duties with the community of Maryville-Our Lady of Guadalupe Shrine; and

**WHEREAS**, in March of 2007, the Reverend John P. Smyth was appointed President of Notre Dame College Prep in Niles, Illinois; and

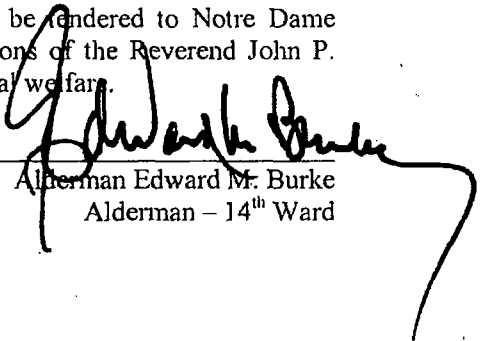
**WHEREAS**, in a situation analogous to the financial difficulties at Maryville Academy, the Reverend John P. Smyth took over the reins of leadership of an institution hovering on the edge of closure after the Congregation of Holy Cross religious order withdrew its sponsorship; and

**WHEREAS**, the Reverend John P. Smyth's fund-raising abilities succeeded in restoring solvency to the school and he succeeded in convincing the Archdiocese to keep the doors of Notre Dame College Prep open; and

**WHEREAS**, the Reverend John P. Smyth retired as President in 2014 but his spirit and his legacy live on and, now therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the Mayor and the members of the Chicago City Council, assembled this twentieth day of May, 2019 do hereby honor the memory of the Reverend John P. Smyth upon his entrance into Eternal Life; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a suitable copy of this resolution be rendered to Notre Dame College Prep in Niles, Illinois as it looks back upon the many contributions of the Reverend John P. Smyth's in the areas of education, child advocacy, spiritual support and social welfare.



Alderman Edward M. Burke  
Alderman - 14<sup>th</sup> Ward