



# City of Chicago



R2017-696

Office of the City Clerk

## Document Tracking Sheet

**Meeting Date:** 7/26/2017

**Sponsor(s):** Burke (14)

**Type:** Resolution

**Title:** Congratulations extended to Paul Durica and Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events on tribute to 50th Anniversary of Daley Center's Picasso sculpture

**Committee(s) Assignment:**

## Resolution

**WHEREAS**, August 15, 2017, officially marks the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the official unveiling of the “Chicago Picasso” in the Chicago Civic Center Plaza (now the Richard J. Daley Center); and

**WHEREAS**, the Chicago City Council has been informed of this anniversary by Alderman Edward M. Burke; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1963 the Chicago Public Building Commission chaired by Mayor Richard J. Daley, agreed to erect a Civic Center to house the law courts, and governmental offices opposite City Hall and the Cook County Building; and

**WHEREAS**, before construction began, the three project design architects, C.F. Murphy Associates; Skidmore, Owings & Merrill; and Loeb, Schlossman, Bennett and Dart decided upon the addition of significant work of public art to grace the Civic Center Plaza facing Washington Street; and

**WHEREAS**, the architects announced their intention to award the commission to the most famous living artist to design the sculpture; and

**WHEREAS**, Pablo Picasso, the renowned Spanish, painter, sculptor, poet and playwright and founder of the Cubist movement in the art world, became their unanimous choice through the urging of Richard Bennett who wrote Picasso a poem asking him to involve himself in the creation of the work; and

**WHEREAS**, William E. Hartmann of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, so instrumental in facilitating the creation of the Chicago Picasso, was presented with a Medal of Merit by the City of Chicago; and

**WHEREAS**, Pablo Picasso completed a maquette of the 162-ton, fifty-foot sculpture in 1965 and approved the final rendering in 1966; and

**WHEREAS**, Pablo Picasso refused an honorarium payment of \$100,000, and instead expressed his wish to present his work as his gift to the City of Chicago; and

**WHEREAS**, three charitable foundations, the Woods Charitable Fund, the Field Foundation and the Chauncey and Marion Deering McCormick Foundation, funded the entire cost of construction of the sculpture, \$351,959.17; and

**WHEREAS**, the American Bridge Company, a division of United States Steel Corporation in Gary, Indiana, fabricated the Chicago Picasso utilizing durable COR-TEN steel; and

**WHEREAS**, ground was broken for the Chicago Picasso on May 25, 1967; and

**WHEREAS**, before a large assemblage in the Civic Center Plaza, including Illinois Poet Laureate Gwendolyn Brooks who read an original poem for the occasion, Roger L. Stevens, Chairman of the National Council on the Arts, Lieutenant Governor Sam Shapiro and many dignitaries, Mayor Richard J. Daley formally dedicated the Chicago Picasso on August 15, 1967; and

**WHEREAS**, following the unveiling public reaction to the sculpture was decidedly mixed, leaving many citizens of Chicago puzzled and disturbed by the symbolism and meaning of the artwork; and

**WHEREAS**, Mayor Richard J. Daley expressed the prophetic opinion that “what may seem strange today will be familiar tomorrow;” and

**WHEREAS**, although Pablo Picasso never explained his inspiration for the unusual design, his grandson Olivier Widmaier Picasso, revealed in 2004, his belief that the sculpture was inspired by Sylvette David, a nineteen-year-old French woman who had posed for Picasso in 1954; and

**WHEREAS**, over time, criticism of the Chicago Picasso waned, and in recent decades it has become an enduring symbol of Chicago and an important, historic structure unique to the city and universally enjoyed by generations of residents; and

**WHEREAS**, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Chicago Picasso in this, the “Year of Public Art 50x 50 Initiative,” a reenactment of the unveiling of the sculpture will take place in the Richard J. Daley Center on August 8, 2017, featuring performers standing in for Mayor Daley, William E. Hartmann Gwendolyn Brooks and other prominent civic leaders in attendance that day; and

**WHEREAS**, Paul Durica, a teacher, writer, historian and creator of a number of public history programs in Chicago conceived this commemoration in conjunction with the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events’ Year of Public Art 50 x 50 Initiative; and now therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED**, That we, the Mayor and the members of the Chicago City Council assembled this twenty-sixth day of July 2017, do hereby recognize, congratulate and thank Paul Durica and the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events for conceiving this ceremonial tribute and re-enactment to the famed sculptor Pablo Picasso, and the internationally recognized artwork that has graced the plaza of The Richard J. Daley Center for fifty years; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that suitable copies of this resolution be presented to Paul Durica and the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events.



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