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Meeting Date:	10/5/2011
Sponsor(s):	Balcer, James (11)
Type:	Resolution
Title:	Tribute to Late Betty Ford
Committee(s) Assignment:	

TRIBUTE TO BETTY FORD

WHEREAS, On July 8, 2011, In His Infinite Wisdom, Almighty God granted eternal rest to Elizabeth Ann Bloomer Warren Ford, known to a grateful nation as Betty Ford; and

WHEREAS, Betty Ford, was First Lady of the United States from 1974 to 1977 during the presidency of her husband Gerald Ford. As First Lady, she was active in social policy and set remarkable precedent as a politically active presidential wife. Following her 1974 mastectomy, she advocated for raising breast cancer awareness and was vocal in her support of the Equal Rights Amendment, and

WHEREAS, One of the few pro-choice GOP women and a leader in the Women's Movement, Betty Ford was best remembered as one of the most candid first ladies in history, especially on the subject of her own addictions; and

WHEREAS, Betty Ford started life in this city on April 8, 1918 as the third child and only daughter of the late William and Hortense Bloomer. During the Great Depression, at 14, she began modeling clothes and teaching children dances such as the foxtrot, waltz, and big apple and studied dance at the Calla Travis Dance Studio. Her father died tragically two years later, and

WHEREAS, Betty Ford studied dance at the Calla Travis Dance Studio and graduated in 1935. In 1936, after she graduated from high school, she wanted to continue her dance studies in New York City, but her mother would not allow it. Instead, she attended the Bennington School of Dance in Bennington, Vermont, for two summers, where she studied under the legendary director Martha Hill with equally legendary choreographers Martha Graham and Hanya Holm. After being accepted by Graham as a student, Ford moved to New York City and worked as a fashion model for John Robert Powers to finance her dance studies. She joined Graham's auxiliary troupe and eventually performed with the company at Carnegie Hall, and

WHEREAS, After her mother married to a family friend and neighbor, Betty Ford lived with them in Grand Rapids, Michigan. She got a job as assistant to the fashion coordinator at a local department store and organized her own dance group, teaching dance at various local sites, and

WHEREAS, In 1942, Betty Ford married William C. Warren, a local insurance salesman, but they divorced five years later. On October 15, 1948, she married Gerald Ford, a lawyer and World War II veteran, at Grace Episcopal Church, in Grand Rapids. At that time, Ford was campaigning for what would be his first of thirteen terms as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives. This union was blessed with three sons, Michael G., John G. and Steven M., as well as one daughter Susan E. and ended only in the passing of the 38th President of the United States 58 years later; and

WHEREAS, Shortly after the dramatic events of 1974 catapulted the Fords into the White House she underwent a mastectomy for breast cancer. She decided to be open about the disease. She stated that there had been so much "cover-up" during Watergate that she wanted to be certain be no cover-up during her husband's administration. Her frankness raised the visibility of a disease about which many Americans were reluctant to discuss, and

WHEREAS, A year after the Fords left the White House, Betty Ford's family challenged her to seek treatment for her alcoholism and an addiction to prescription pills she had been taking since the early 1960s. In 1982, after her successful treatment, she established the Betty Ford Center in Rancho Mirage, California, for chemical dependency. With her characteristic candor and aplomb, she co-authored a book in 1987 about her treatment titled "Betty: A Glad Awakening". In 2003, she authored a second book on the topic, "Healing and Hope. Six Women from the Betty Ford Center Share Their Powerful Journeys of Addiction and Recovery"; and

WHEREAS, For her convictions and her courage, Betty Ford received many accolades including, the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President George H. W. Bush on November 18, 1991 and a


Congressional Gold Medal in 1999. Most recently, on May 8, 2003, she received the Woodrow Wilson Award in Los Angeles for her public service from the Woodrow Wilson Center of the Smithsonian Institution; and

WHEREAS, In death as in life, Betty Ford continued to receive high praise and honor for her four score and thirteen years on earth Her funeral service were held in Palm Desert, California, on July 12, 2011, and was attended by more than 800 people, including former president George W. Bush, First Lady Michelle Obama and former first ladies Rosalynn Carter, Nancy Reagan, and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. Her remains were flown to Grand Rapids where a second service was held at Grace Episcopal Church Eulogies were given by Lynne Cheney and her son, Steven Former President Bill Clinton, former Vice President Dick Cheney and former first lady Barbara Bush were in attendance, and

WHEREAS, The Honorable James A Balcer, Alderman of the 11th Ward, has informed this august body of the transition of this remarkable and resilient First Lady, now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED That we, the Mayor and members of the City of Chicago City Council, gathered together this 5th Day of October, 2011 AD, do hereby express our sincere sorrow upon the passing of Elizabeth Ann Ford and extend our deepest condolence to her family and friends as well as the many citizens whose lives she has touched.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and presented to the family of Elizabeth Ann Ford


JAMES A BALCER
Alderman - 11th Ward