



City of Chicago



R2018-437

Office of the City Clerk

Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date:	4/18/2018
Sponsor(s):	Sawyer (6)
Type:	Resolution
Title:	Congratulations extended to Leak and Sons Funeral Homes on 80th anniversary and Spencer Leak, Sr., on 80th birthday
Committee(s) Assignment:	

SALUTE TO TWO GREAT PILLARS
OF CHICAGO'S AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

WHEREAS, in the midst of the nation's Great Depression, Rev. A.R. Leak came to this city with a vision of opening his own funeral business after having realized that Chicago's African-Americans could not afford to bury their loved ones in a respectable manner; and

WHEREAS, the pioneering Chicago mortician opened a funeral home in 1933 with \$500.00 that he earned as a bathroom attendant at the Chicago Century of Progress World's Fair and a \$500.00 loan from his wife. In 1938, he founded the A.R. Leak Funeral chapels that have become a pillar of this city's African-American community with two locations in Chicago and south suburban Country Club Hills where his son and grandson serve more than 2000 families per year; and

WHEREAS, On April 15, 1938, A.R. and Dorothy Leak's union was blessed with a son who they named Spencer who would follow in his father into the funeral business and also become an iconic pillar of his community. Spencer Leak and his three brothers grew up in this city's historic Bronzeville neighborhood. He attended Raymond Elementary School, graduated from Hyde Park High School in 1956. He went on to Wilson Junior College, and graduated from Worsham College of Mortuary Science in 1959; and

WHEREAS, Spencer Leak, Sr. served his country in the United States Army and was stationed in West Germany. In 1964, Leak joined 10,000 activists led by his father and Reverend Clay Evans to protest the racially segregated Oakwood Cemetery. As a result of that action, Oakwood Cemetery opened its gates to African Americans and is now the final resting place of many famous African Americans including the great athlete, Jesse Owens and Mayor Harold Washington; and

WHEREAS, inspired by the leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King, Junior, Leak became intimately involved with the Civil Rights movement. He provided limousine service for Dr. King during his time in Chicago, often personally driving him to and from the airport and to special events such as his famous speech at Soldier Field in Chicago concerning the housing crisis; and

WHEREAS, in 1970, Leak became president and funeral director of Leak and Sons Funeral Homes and assumed a major role in running the family business. Knowing the vital importance of education, he returned to school, earning his B.S. degree from Daniel Hale Williams College in 1979 and his M.S. degree in criminal justice from Chicago State University in 1981; and

WHEREAS, Spencer Leak, Sr. used that education to enter public service. Since 1982 to the present day, he has illustriously served as Consumer Affairs Chief for the Illinois Attorney General (1982 - 1985), Executive Director of the Cook County Department of Corrections (1987 - 1991), Deputy Chief Inspector-General for the Illinois Secretary of State (1991 - 1993), Manager of Illinois Vehicle Services (1993 - 1999), Deputy Director of District 1 for the Illinois Department of Corrections (1993 - 1999); and Commissioner on the Illinois Human Rights Commission (1999 - present). Additionally, Leak has extended his civic commitment by sponsoring and hosting a weekly radio program, *It's Time Truth Speaks*, on WGCI-FM every Sunday; and

WHEREAS, the Honorable Roderick Sawyer, Alderman of the 6th Ward, has apprised this august body of the dual milestones that have been achieved by Leak and Sons Funeral chapels as well as that of its president Spencer Leak, Sr.; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that we, the Mayor and members of the City of Chicago City Council gathered together on this 18th Day of April, 2018 AD, do hereby salute Leak and Sons Funeral Homes for its eight decades of continuous and dedicated service to the African American communities of Chicago and its suburbs as well as congratulate Spencer Leak, Sr. on the occasion of his 80th birthday.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and presented to Spencer Leak, Sr.



RODERICK T. SAWYER
Alderman – 6th Ward