



City of Chicago



R2023-507

Office of the City Clerk Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date:	4/19/2023
Sponsor(s):	Burke (14)
Type:	Resolution
Title:	Congratulations extended to Sister Rosemary Connelly on achieving 2023 Laetare Medal
Committee(s) Assignment:	

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, on May 21, 2023 Sister Rosemary Connelly, former Executive Director of Misericordia and lifelong advocate for individuals with developmental disabilities, will receive the University of Notre Dame's 2023 Laetare Medal, the oldest and most prestigious honor given to American Catholics; and

WHEREAS, Misericordia Home, founded in 1921, provides residential options and educational and social programs to more than 600 children and adults from diverse backgrounds and wide economic strata on its thirty-one acre North Side campus; and

WHEREAS, in the belief that human dignity is the key to quality of life, Sister Rosemary Connelly has profoundly changed and improved the standards of care for the developmentally disabled community; and

WHEREAS, Misericordia Home's mission is dedicated to the principle that each person should be encouraged to achieve his or her maximum through educational, vocational, spiritual, and recreational programs; and

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

WHEREAS, born in Chicago, Sister Rosemary Connelly attended Catholic schools and taught in several Archdiocese of Chicago schools; and

WHEREAS, in 1959 Sister Rosemary Connelly earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Social Science from Saint Xavier University; and

WHEREAS, she subsequently earned her Master of Arts Degree in Sociology from Saint Louis University in 1966 and a Master's Degree in Social Work from Loyola University Chicago in 1969; and

WHEREAS, Sister Rosemary Connelly was appointed Administrator of Misericordia Heart of Mercy in August 1969 at a time when the institution only accepted children under the age of six; and

WHEREAS, the first seven years of Sister Rosemary Connelly's tenure were spent on Chicago's South Side, where Misericordia Home was originally located; and

WHEREAS, in the winter of 1976, following the announcement closure of the Angel Guardian Orphanage at 6300 Ridge Avenue in Chicago, Sister Rosemary Connelly negotiated with the Archdiocese a transfer of the campus to the North Side with the proviso that Misericordia Home would assume responsibility for new construction and plant operations; and

WHEREAS, she moved thirty-five staff members and thirty-nine children who did not require the high levels of nursing services to the newly established North Campus that over time added

The Heart of Mercy Village and the Brian and Sue Shannon Apartment Building providing for the residential needs of adults with moderate disabilities; and

WHEREAS, recognizing a critical need to establish substantive programming, goals, and aspirations for the residential population, Sister Rosemary Connelly put an ambitious plan of action to address these inadequacies into practice by building classrooms for primary education and establishing many worthy programs inclusive of self-help skills, speech and physical therapy, and recreational activities; and

WHEREAS, under Sister Rosemary Connelly's inspired leadership and guiding hand Misericordia Home greatly expanded its residential housing options over a couple of decades, adding The McGowan Residence home and the Holbrook Residence for people with physical and mental disabilities; and

WHEREAS, with continuing expansion of Misericordia Home facilities and greatly enhanced therapeutic programs in the second decade of the new Millennium, 600 children and adult residents, and residents with mild to moderate disabilities are living meaningful and productive lives along with two-hundred additional people who attend various programs; and

WHEREAS, today, Misericordia Home's campus includes over twenty residences and buildings and thirteen Community Integrated Living Arrangements in the neighborhood that house more than seventy-eight high-functioning adults; and

WHEREAS, Sister Rosemary Connelly's inspired leadership, humanity and passionate commitment encompassing more than seven decades, has been integral to establishing Misericordia Home as one of the nation's premier treatment and residential communities for children and adults with intellectual and developmental differences; and

WHEREAS, now 92, she has recently transitioned from her role as Executive Director to Chairwoman of the Board of the Misericordia Foundation, which focuses on fundraising efforts, and continues to spend as much time as she can working with the Misericordia community; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, *Chicago Magazine* named Sister Rosemary Connelly, a "2014 Chicagoan of the Year;" and

WHEREAS, in 2013, Marquette University bestowed upon Sister Rosemary Connelly the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*; and

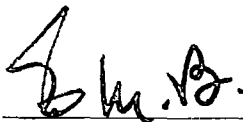
WHEREAS, she has also received seven other honorary doctorate degrees from the University of Notre Dame, Loyola University, Chicago, DePaul University, Lewis University, Saint Xavier University, Dominican University and St. Mary's at Notre Dame; and

WHEREAS, Sister Rosemary Connelly has been granted Chicago's highest honor, the Medal of Merit for her life's work spanning more than seventy years of advocacy, spiritual support and social welfare; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Mayor and the members of the Chicago City Council, assembled this nineteenth day of April, 2023, do hereby commend Sister Rosemary Connelly for her faith, grace and humanity through a lifetime of service and inspired devotion, and congratulate her on receiving the University of Notre Dame's 2023 Laetare Medal, and wish her all the best as she continues with her mission; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that May 21, 2023 be declared Sister Rosemary Connelly Day in the City of Chicago; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to Sister Rosemary Connelly as a sign of our respect and good wishes.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "E. M. Burke", is written over a horizontal line.

Edward M. Burke
Alderman, 14th Ward