



City of Chicago



R2013-842

Office of the City Clerk

Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date: 9/11/2013

Sponsor(s): Reboyras, Ariel (30)

Type: Resolution

Title: Recognition extended to Antonio "Tony" Irrizarry for dedication and service to Puerto Rican community

Committee(s) Assignment:

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Antonio "Tony" Irizarry was born in Utuado, Puerto Rico on January 3, 1925. A staunch civic and community leader for over 62 years, Mr. Irizarry's first signs of leadership stems back to his high school years. Elected president of the student council, he immediately founded the first school newspaper called "Albores." His writing and artistic talents won him two of three prize entries, promoting the military service; and,

WHEREAS, In 1949, Antonio "Tony" Irizarry came to the United States, living first in California and then in New York for a few years; and,

WHEREAS, In 1951, Antonio "Tony" Irizarry came to Chicago and very quickly fell in love with the city. He studied at the Chicago Art Institute and the University of Chicago where he earned a degree in Fine Arts and Journalism. During his first years in Chicago, he worked with various agencies, including the Department of Labor under the Office of the Government of Puerto Rico, the Illinois Youth Commission, the Chicago Boys Clubs, and the Office of Hispanic Affairs under Governor Richard Ogilvy's administration in the early 70s; and,

WHEREAS, In 1960, Antonio "Tony" Irizarry published the first Hispanic TV guide. In 1975, he founded the "Empezamos Job Preparation Program" which was supported by state and federal funds. In 1979, he became the president of West Town Economic Development Corp. (WEDCO). In 1982, Tony launched "Nuestro Directorio Anuario Publication" to promote different events in the community and provide a complete listing of businesses, media, community and political leaders; and,

WHEREAS, In 1983, Antonio "Tony" Irizarry founded and produced "Ferias Poblanas Puertorriqueñas" at the Northwest National Guard Armory in Humboldt Park, with the amazing line-up of well-known performers that included El Gran Combo, the Puerto Rican Power, Pellin Rodriguez, Barrio Boys, Ednita Nazario, Jailine Cintron, and Felito Felix, among other luminaries. The first Fiesta Poblana is most remembered for the attendance of 24 mayors from Puerto Rico-- a historical and notable accomplishment; and,

WHEREAS, Sports and artistic events were also part of Tony's creative passion. He created "Nuestro Awards Ceremony," which recognized local and international personalities from film and television. Participants included Ignacio Lopez Tarso, Ruben Reynoso, Arturo Velazco, Bobby Capo and Ariel Reboyras, among others; and,

WHEREAS, Antonio "Tony" Irizarry always found time to volunteer and provide his expertise with many community groups like the Puerto Rican Parade of Chicago, Spanish American Businessman Organization, The Puerto Rican Forum, and in 1961, Tony was one of the key people to lead a movement to officially establish the Puerto Rican Parade in Chicago; and,


WHEREAS, Antonio "Tony" Irizarry's creative vein stopped at nothing. From 1957, his keen sense of civic and cultural immersion led him to create many worthy programs, such as "Miss Valentine Beauty Pageant" which lasted until 1998; and,

WHEREAS, Antonio "Tony" Irrizarry, infused by his passion of the history of the Latino community in Chicago, especially Puerto Ricans, collected pictures, news clips, original images and historical data, which today makes him, one of the individuals with the most complete archives; and,

WHEREAS, Despite his health and financial challenges, Antonio "Tony" Irrizarry, a legend in his own right, has continued his efforts to expand his archives and collection. His goal is to open a special exhibit of what he calls, "A Retrospective of Latinos in Chicago" sometime soon; and now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, gathered here this eleventh day of September, 2013 A.D., do hereby commend Mr. Antonio "Tony" Irrizarry for his dedication and service to the Puerto Rican community; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation to Mr. Antonio "Tony" Irrizarry.



Ariel E. Reboyras
Alderman, 30th Ward