



City of Chicago



R2021-89

Office of the City Clerk

Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date:	2/26/2021
Sponsor(s):	Burnett (27)
Type:	Resolution
Title:	Tribute to late Dr. Manford Byrd, Jr.
Committee(s) Assignment:	

A resolution

adopted by
of the

The City Council
City of Chicago, Illinois



Presented by ALDERMAN WALTER BURNETT, JR. on FEBRUARY 24, 2021

WHEREAS, It is with tremendous sadness that the members of this Chamber learned of God, in His Infinite Wisdom having brought to close the life of Dr. Manford Byrd, Jr., calling him home to his eternal reward on January 17, 2021; and

WHEREAS, The Chicago City Council has been informed of Dr. Manford Byrd's passing by the Honorable Walter Burnett, Jr., Alderman of the 27th Ward; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Manford Byrd, Jr. was born on May 29, 1928 in Brewton, Alabama to Manford Byrd Sr. and Evelyn Turk Byrd. He attended high school at Southern Normal High School in Brewton and, as a result of the school's affiliation with the Dutch Reformed Church, was recruited to attend Central College in Pella, Iowa where he majored in Mathematics and played on the college's baseball and basketball teams. After graduating from Central College in 1949, he would go on to earn a Master's Degree in Education from Atlanta University in 1954; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Byrd began his career in education teaching in Quincy, Illinois from 1949-1954 before accepting a teaching position in Chicago, Illinois. From 1954-1967, he worked for the Chicago Public School system as a teacher, assistant principal, elementary and high school principal and assistant to the General Superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools. In 1968, he was appointed Deputy Superintendent and Chief Operating Officer of Chicago Public Schools. This appointment at the relatively young age of 39, made Dr. Byrd one of the highest ranking African American public sector leaders in the nation; and

WHEREAS, Despite his relatively quick ascension to the position of Deputy Superintendent, it was 17 years before Dr. Byrd achieved the position of General Superintendent of Chicago Public Schools. During the 1970s after serving for several years as the Deputy Superintendent, Dr. Byrd was passed over for the General Superintendent position when a vacancy occurred despite strong support from Chicago's Black community, who believed race was a primary reason for him not being selected to the top post. The stated rationale at the time was that he did not have a Phd; and

WHEREAS, This prompted him to get his Doctorate Degree in Education from Northwestern University in 1978. He would maintain a strong allegiance to Northwestern University for the rest of his life as a Northwestern Football season ticket holder; and

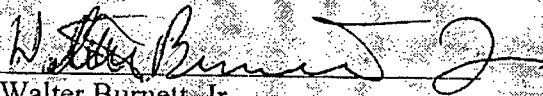
WHEREAS, Dr. Byrd was appointed to the position of General Superintendent in 1985, two years after his friend and colleague, the late Harold Washington, was elected mayor of Chicago. He remained superintendent until 1989 and retired in 1990; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Byrd served on many boards and organizations including the Chicago State University Foundation, Joint Negro Appeal, the Mid-America Chapter of the American Red Cross, the Chicago NAACP the United Church Board for World Ministries, the University of Illinois Chicago Urban Health Programs, the Board of Trustees of Central College and the Adler Planetarium in Chicago. He was the recipient of over 100 awards and commendations for excellence in teaching and academic administration, including honorary doctoral degrees from Central College, Hope College and the National College of Education. He was also recognized by The HistoryMakers; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Byrd's life journey was rooted in his deep abiding faith. He was a charter member of the Trinity United Church of Christ (founded 1961) and in 1981, the church established the annual Dr. Manford Byrd Jr. Black Value System – Educational Scholarship in his honor. Dr. Byrd is survived by his wife of 64 years, Cheribelle Byrd, his three sons and daughters in law: Carl (Beverly), Bradley (Stephanie) and Donald (Julie), 8 grandchildren, 1 great grandson and a host of other family and friends. Dr. Byrd was 92 years old; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor, and the members of the Chicago City Council assembled here this Twenty-fourth Day of February 2021, do hereby express our sincerest condolences to the family of Dr. Manford Byrd, Jr., and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Dr. Manford Byrd, Jr., as a token of our acknowledgement of a life well lived.



Walter Burnett, Jr.
Alderman, 27th Ward