



# City of Chicago



**R2017-575**

Office of the City Clerk

## Document Tracking Sheet

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	6/28/2017
<b>Sponsor(s):</b>	Sawyer (6)
<b>Type:</b>	Resolution
<b>Title:</b>	Congratulations extended to Billy Branch and Sons of Blues on 40th anniversary
<b>Committee(s) Assignment:</b>	

## **SALUTE TO BILLY BRANCH**

WHEREAS, Billy Branch is a blues music icon who has dedicated his life to the promotion and maintenance of this legendary and uniquely Chicago music venue; and

WHEREAS, Born William Earl Branch on October 3, 1951 in Great Lakes, Illinois just north of this city, he and his family moved to Los Angeles when he was five years of age. Branch returned to Chicago in 1969 to attend and graduate from the University of Illinois; and

WHEREAS, That same year Billy Branch also attended the first Chicago Blues Fest, produced by another blues legend, Willie Dixon. Six years later, Branch started touring with Dixon's Chicago Blues All-Stars, eventually taking the place of harmonica player Carey Bell, after Bell left to form his own band; and

WHEREAS, In 1977, Billy Branch founded the Sons of Blues, with Lurrie Bell (the son of Carey Bell) on guitar and Freddie Dixon (the son of Willie Dixon) on bass guitar. Since then, he has played on over 150 different recordings, including 12 under his own name as well as recording with such acclaimed blues figures as Willie Dixon, Johnny Winter, Lou Rawls, Koko Taylor, Eddy Clearwater, Honeyboy Edwards, Syl Johnson, Lurrie Bell, Ronnie Baker Brooks, and Taj Mahal; and

WHEREAS, Billy Branch plays the harmonica with the clean precision of a Junior Wells or a Paul Butterfield without sacrificing the soulfulness of a Little Walter. His sound has become his own during the last four decades. He has received 3 Grammy Award Nominations and an Emmy Award. Additionally, he retired with distinction from the Grammy's board of governors, representing Chicago Blues in a professionally distinctive manner; and

WHEREAS, On June 9, 2017, the Chicago Blues Festival at Millennium Park honors the fortieth anniversary of Billy Branch and the Sons of Blues. This date also marks the fortieth anniversary of Billy Branch's international "Blues in Schools" program that has provided an opportunity for professional musicians to take up residency in schools to educate Chicago's children about "the blues"; and

WHEREAS, The Honorable Roderick T. Sawyer, Alderman of the 6<sup>th</sup> Ward where this legendary bluesman resides, has apprised this august body of this momentous occasion; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and members of the City of Chicago City Council, gathered this 28<sup>th</sup> Day of June, 2017 AD, do hereby salute Billy Branch and his Sons of Blues on the occasion of their four decades of dedication to sharing the unique and important legacy of the Chicago Blues with fans in Chicago and around the world.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and presented to Billy Branch.



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RODERICK T. SAWYER  
Alderman – 6<sup>th</sup> Ward