



City of Chicago



R2019-360

Office of the City Clerk

Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date:	5/29/2019
Sponsor(s):	Burke (14) Vasquez, Jr. (40)
Type:	Resolution
Title:	Congratulations extended to Sister Rosemary Connelly, RSM on receipt of Medal of Merit
Committee(s) Assignment:	

WHEREAS, on August 25, 2019, Sister Rosemary Connelly, RSM, and will observe seventy years as a Religious Sister of Mercy and fifty years as Executive Director of Misericordia Home, a community of care, hope and inspiration, maximizing the potential for children and adults with developmental and physical disabilities; 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 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 City of Chicago has been informed of her great milestone 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 announced 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, Sister Rosemary Connelly 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 twenty-year period, adding The McGowan Residence home and the Holbrook Residence for people with physical and mental disabilities; and

WHEREAS, in 2001, the Sister Rosemary/Connelly Homes, accommodating thirty-six children and young adults opened; and

WHEREAS, furthering the mission and vision of championing inclusion through participation and charted by Sister Rosemary Connelly, Misericordia added seven additional homes in the adjoining community: the Hulseman-Murphy Home, the Farrow Home, the McAllister Home, the Walsh Home, the Houlihan Home, the Maxwell Home and the Eisenberg Home; 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 (CILAs) in the neighborhood that house more than seventy-eight high-functioning adults; and

WHEREAS, Misericordia Home now has an aging population, so the Quinlan Terrace was built to meet this population's needs; and

WHEREAS, recognizing that the key to achieving long-term fiscal sustainability to support programming, Sister Rosemary Connelly, a unifying force for good, understood that Misericordia Home could not rely solely on public and governmental support to care for its residents; and

WHEREAS, Sister Rosemary Connelly built a broad base of private support through donor participation with the endorsement and encouragement of business and political leaders and celebrities from the world of entertainment and sports; and

WHEREAS, Sister Rosemary Connelly's inspired leadership, humanity and passionate commitment encompassing 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, in 2014, *Chicago Magazine* named Sister Rosemary Connelly, a “2014 Chicagoan of the Year;” and

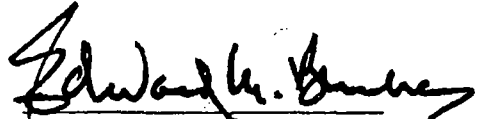
WHEREAS, in 2013, Marquette University bestowed upon Sister Rosemary Connelly the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*; and

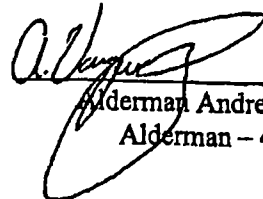
WHEREAS, Sister Rosemary Connelly has also received seven other honorary doctorate degrees from the University of Notre Dame, Loyola University, Chicago, DePaul University, Lewis University, Saint Xavier University, Dominican University and St. Mary’s at Notre Dame; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Mayor and the members of the Chicago City Council, assembled this twentieth day of May, 2019 do hereby commend Sister Rosemary Connelly for her faith, grace and humanity through a lifetime of service and inspired devotion, and wish her all the best as she continues with her mission; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in recognition of Sister Rosemary Connelly’s life and work spanning seventy years of advocacy, spiritual support and social welfare, we bestow upon her Chicago’s highest honor, the Medal of Merit; 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.


Alderman Edward M. Burke
Alderman – 14th Ward


Alderman Andre Vasquez
Alderman – 40th Ward