



City of Chicago



R2013-887

Office of the City Clerk

Document Tracking Sheet

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| Meeting Date: | 10/16/2013 |
| Sponsor(s): | Fioretti (2) |
| Type: | Resolution |
| Title: | Congratulations extended to Herb Kent, "Cool Gent" on 85th birthday |
| Committee(s) Assignment: | |

SALUTE TO THE 85th BIRTHDAY OF HERB KENT, THE COOL GENT

WHEREAS, On October 5, 2013, urban radio pioneer and living legend Herbert Rogers Kent celebrates his 85th Birthday; and

WHEREAS, Known to millions of his fans as Herb Kent, the Cool Gent, he grew up on the South Side of Chicago in the Ida B. Wells housing projects. As a teenager, Kent took a keen interest in radio and started out by building broadcast equipment, including a set of microphones, from surplus World War II parts. At the age of 16, he was accepted into the WBEZ Radio Workshops run by the Chicago Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, The soon-to-be-known as "Cool Gent" joined a local community theater group and his performance on stage soon made him realize that many of the skills required of a successful stage actor applied to radio as well. It was he who brought "theater of the mind" to radio, developing such popular radio characters throughout the years as, "The Wahoo Man," "Gym Shoe Creeper," and "The Electric Crazy People"; and

WHEREAS, In 1949, Kent got his first paid radio job in Gary, Indiana for \$35 a week. The station had only two radio personalities and he was able to learn every aspect of putting a radio show together from producing, writing, and interviewing, to polishing his own on-air presence, working twelve-hour shifts, seven days a week; and

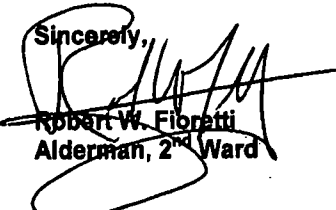
WHEREAS, By the 1950s, Herb Kent's first fan club was formed and the moniker, "Cool Gent" was firmly established in Chicago radio's lexicon. It was he who coined the term, "dusty records" to describe old-time favorite hits. The dust in the grooves would make a crackling sound as they were played; and

WHEREAS, The Cool Gent's career, working at legendary radio stations such as WVON and WJJD garnered him interviews with such iconic African American musical artists as Duke Ellington, Smokey Robinson, James Brown, Stevie Wonder, Diana Ross, and Marvin Gaye. Kent has also garnered numerous honors for his years of service to the citizens of this city. In 1995, he was inducted into the Museum of Broadcasting's Radio Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, The Honorable Robert W. Fioretti, Alderman of the 2nd Ward has apprised this august body of this octogenarian of the airwave's significant milestone, now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED That we, the Mayor and members of the City of Chicago City Council, gathered together this 16th Day of October, 2013, do hereby salute Herbert Rogers Kent as the one and only Cool Gent and extend our very best wishes for his continuing health, happiness and success in all of his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and presented to Herb Kent, the Cool Gent.

Sincerely,

Robert W. Fioretti
Alderman, 2nd Ward