

MRS. JOSIE B. CHILDS CITY COUNCIL MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Almighty God, in His infinite wisdom and judgment has called to her eternal rest, Mrs. Josie B. Childs, a beloved citizen, faithful woman of God and friend to a multitude of Chicagoans. Today the Chicago City Council honors the life of the founder and President of the nonprofit Chicago-based Mayor Harold Washington Legacy Committee (MHWLC), the late Mrs. Josie B. Childs. This exemplary woman has been a celebrated and widely respected civic icon for many years and by several generations of Chicagoans; and

WHEREAS, I - - Leslie Hairston, 5th Ward Alderman join my City Council colleagues in being very sorry to hear of her death. Furthermore, we'll also will miss her undeniable passion, contagious spirit & tireless dedication. The suave, confident persona and never give up or give in approach Josie, a longtime South Shore resident perfected, was hugely successful in many diverse areas; and

WHEREAS, Many local leaders and activists also believe it's probably no coincidence that Josie made her transition and joined Harold in Heaven on February 13, 2023 as Chicago is concluding the year-long **100th Centennial** of the late Mayor Harold Washington's birth and as we approach the **40th Anniversary** of his historical 1983 election as Chicago's First Black Mayor; and

WHEREAS, During the turbulent era in America, when rampant social change was on the horizon virtually every week, to recent similar civic incursions, Josie served a passionate, stabilizing social force, while fighting for causes she believed in. Equally significant, back then and today, throughout her entire accomplished life until her unfortunate passing, Josie advised, nurtured, and represented new generations of activist Black and multi-cultural objectors from the neighborhoods of Chicago;

WHEREAS, Josie Childs was a vibrant, no-nonsense, dynamic, and highly engaging 96-year-old south side Chicagoan, whose entire life encompassed both a historical and present-day living memoir of influential, insightful, and inspirational importance. Her visionary leadership is widely revered and recognized throughout Chicago and across the U.S. by an impressive, diverse cross-section of high-impact trailblazers as the driving force which has consistently elevated Mayor Washington's profound legacy, and inspired multi-generations of diverse Chicago political, business and community leaders, emerging young, next-gen advocates, and future change-agents; and

WHEREAS, Over the years, Josie Child's reputation for dedication, fairness, integrity, and accuracy grew exponentially. She is also revered for her deep personal concern and commitment to the overall community, as well as her unique ability to establish lasting relationships among ultra high-level local and national elected, business, and cultural influencers, as well as everyday community leaders and residents; and

WHEREAS, Josie Childs was born on October 13, 1926, in Clarksdale, Mississippi, to her mother Julia and father Charles, a dentist. Her grandparents were Black southern landowners and educational teachers. Although born in Clarksdale, Childs grew up in Memphis, Tennessee and Vicksburg, Tennessee. After graduating high school and attending LeMoyne-Owen College in Memphis Tennessee, Josie moved to Chicago in the late 1940s, and married the love of her life, the late **James "Jack" Childs Sr.** who preceded her in death. Josie was a founding member of The Congregational Church of Park Manor UCC where both she and **Jack** served as lifelong members until their passing. They were worldwide travelers, partners in church, social and civic activities, lovers of fine dining, the theater, the arts, card games and last but not least, jazz music. Many successful Chicago political campaigns, civic engagement, community, plans, and other events were coordinated and implemented at the **Childs'** massive dining room table; and

WHEREAS, Josie was a cultural, arts-focused, and most important – a progressive political firebrand. She exposed many young people to, and supported programs at institutions such as **Columbia College Chicago**, the **Goodman Theater**, and **Harold Washington College**. She also encouraged youth to become civic-minded and involved in ongoing efforts of political organizers striving towards a more just and equitable city; and

WHEREAS, Josie was very, very well-known, respected, and popular all over the city, but particularly on the South Side. She maintained an impressively large base of supporters among multicultural coalition groups and women. She was a fierce and vocal advocate for Black political empowerment in Chicago and across the U.S. And a trailblazing woman focused on power and equality; and

WHEREAS, Josie was involved with many organizations; The **Chicago Urban League**, the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, the **Board of the Friends of the Chicago Public Library**, **Planned Parenthood**, **T.R.U.S.T. Inc.**, the **Board of Know Your Chicago**, the **Joint Negro Appeal**, the **National Board of Council on Lay Life and Work**, including the **Duke Ellington Society**, and **Executive Service Corps.**, the **Christ Hospital Nursing School**, the **former President of her condominium board**; she worked the congressional campaigns of **Abner Mikva**, **Ralph Metcalfe**, **Rod Blagojevich**, and **Harold Washington**; an Illinois organizer for the presidential campaigns of **Adlai Stevenson Sr.**, **John F. Kennedy**, **Lyndon B. Johnson**, and **Jimmy Carter**. She was also an **Illinois Democratic delegate** at the **1980 Democratic National Convention (DNC)** in New York City, including working with the late **Hon. Harold Washington** on his original 1977 and 1983 successful mayoral campaigns and following his historic election, served for many years in administrative positions with the City of Chicago's Special Events and Cultural Affairs departments; and

WHEREAS, Josie Childs remained active during her entire life. In 2013, she partnered with a coalition of local political civic activists and established the Mayor Harold Washington Legacy Committee (MHWLC), a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, educational and civic engagement entity, which among other initiatives, has established a \$100K 'Mayor Harold Washington Legacy Scholarship' at his alma mater – **Roosevelt University**. The MHWLC is dedicated to preserving the integrity and authenticity of the progressive policy messages of former Chicago Mayor Harold Washington. It also amplifies for today's and future generations of change-agents the memory and historical legacy of this great political statesman and **Chicago's 1st Black Mayor**; and

WHEREAS, The recipient of numerous awards and honors, in 2013, **Congressman Danny K. Davis** honored Josie with the **Georgia Palmer Advocacy Award**. She was last honored in February 2019 by the **DuSable Museum of African-American History** and corporate giant **Comcast** as one of the **"Voices of the Civil Rights Movement"**. She had also recently donated the "Josie Brown Childs Papers," a collection of documents consisting of family history, her political and social advocacy work, and her efforts to promote enhanced awareness of African American cultural and historical achievements to the **Chicago Public Library**. Josie Brown Childs is truly deserving of the title, one of the **"Matriarchs of the Movement"**; and

WHEREAS, **Josie Childs** will also be long revered for her deep personal concern and commitment to the overall community, as well as her unique ability to establish lasting relationships. She leaves countless friends, associates, public officials, church members, and admirers to cherish her profound life and memory, including her family: son **James M. Childs Jr. (Bonnie Collins)** of Chicago Illinois, grandchildren **James A. Childs**, **Claudia L. Houndje (Adrien Houndje)** and **Elysia R. Childs (L. Almestica)** of Chicago Illinois, great grandchildren, **Semenou, Mense, Fifa** and **Hontongou Houndje**; and

THEREFORE, Be It Resolved, That we, the Mayor, and the members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, gathered here in assembly this 19th day of April 2023 A.D., do hereby express our sorrow on the passing of Mrs. Josie B. Childs and extend to her family, friends, neighbors, civic associates and church members our sincere condolences; and

Be It Further Resolved, that a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and presented to the family of Mrs. Josie B. Childs.

Leslie Hairston, Alderman – 5th Ward

March 12, 2023 Written and submitted by A.L. Smith, Media Affairs-Mayor Harold Washington Legacy Committee