



City of Chicago



R2018-1137

Office of the City Clerk

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Meeting Date: 10/31/2018
Sponsor(s): Osterman (48)
Type: Resolution
Title: Tribute to late Ronald Charles Smith
Committee(s) Assignment:



ALDERMAN HARRY OSTERMAN
48TH WARD
MEMORIAL RESOLUTION FOR RONALD CHARLES SMITH

WHEREAS, It is with great sadness that members of this Chamber learned of the death of Ronald Charles Smith, on October 19, 2018 at the age of 84; and

WHEREAS, The City Council has been informed of his passing by the Honorable Harry Osterman, Alderman of the 48th Ward; and

WHEREAS, Born on December 9, 1933 in Chicago, Illinois, Ron was a graduate of Fenwick High School in Oak Park and received a B.S. in Humanities from Loyola University where he earned several honors and participated in many activities, most notably debate and student newspaper. He joined the faculty at Loyola University Chicago where he taught speech for one year; and

WHEREAS, In 1956, Ron joined the U.S. Navy as a naval helicopter pilot and personnel officer. He completed his active duty but remained a naval reservist until retiring as a Lieutenant-Commander in 1977. While in the Navy, Ron acquired the nickname "Red dog" due to his bright red hair; and

WHEREAS, Ron attended Loyola (Chicago) University Law School from 1962 to 1965, writing for the law review and taking part in law school activities. After graduation, he clerked for Justice John V. McCormick of the Illinois Appellate Court in 1965-1966. During that year, a law school friend, Janice Metros Johnston, said that her husband Gil was running the legal writing program at The John Marshall Law School and suggested Ron apply to be an adjunct. That post began his long association with John Marshall; and

WHEREAS, After the clerkship in 1966, Ron was a legal counsel for the Santa Fe Railroad, where he learned about governmental regulation and administrative procedure. In 1968 Dean Noble W. Lee asked him to come to JMLS. Ron taught many different courses but eventually specialized in constitutional law and criminal law; and

WHEREAS, In 1968 when Illinoisans voted to hold a constitutional convention, Ron decided to run with Elmer Gertz, a lawyer who lived in Ravenswood and Albany Park area near Ron, to be delegates to the convention. Elmer, a noted civil rights lawyer, and Ron ran as a team against two "machine" candidates backed by the regular organization of the Cook County Democratic Party. When the convention met on December 8, 1969, Ron and Elmer took their seats as members of the convention allied to the "independent bloc" of about ten delegates. Ron was a member of the Committee on the Executive Article Committee, where he sponsored the amendatory veto provision; and

WHEREAS, In 1972, Ron ran for the Democratic nomination for the Illinois State Senate. The party regulars conspired to deprive him of the seat by running a candidate who would win, but then resign the nomination in favor of a replacement chosen by the party. Ron's lawsuit, *Smith v. Cherry*, 489 F. 2d 1098 (1974), was a notable federal elections lawsuit until legislation changed the situation. Unwilling to leave government life, he served as a member of Governor Walker's Ethics Board, among other appointed positions, while continuing to teach at John Marshall until 2014; and

WHEREAS, Ron continued to specialize in criminal law. In the 1970's he served as an assistant state's attorney during the summer, prosecuting cases for the Cook County State's Attorney. Later he defended indigent accused, often those who were not knowledgeable in English or the American legal system, His work with the criminal justice sections of bar associations culminated in his election to the chairmanship of the American Bar Association's Criminal Justice Section in the fateful year of 2001. During that year he was often the voice of the A.B.A. on anti-terrorism activities and international criminal justice; and

WHEREAS, In 1991 Ron founded the National Criminal Justice Trial Advocacy Competition, co-sponsored by The John Marshall Law School and The American Bar Association and held at the law school. Teams from all over the United States and other countries have participated in this award-winning and path-breaking exercise in training future prosecutors and defense attorneys; and

WHEREAS, Since his retirement, Ron took part in several law-related activities. He will be remembered as someone devoted to making Illinois a better place to live, to securing justice for everyone, and to preparing law students to enter the noble profession that he loved; and

WHEREAS, Ron leaves to cherish his memory, his adored wife of 47 years, Mary Ann Scherer Smith; loving sons, Michael (Liv Rainey) Smith and Matthew (Carolyn Chandler) Smith; precious goddaughter, Margaret Thompson Blumberg, and beloved cousins Philip, Jonathan and Mark Thompson; and

WHEREAS, Ron was a man of great strength, strong will and conviction. He touched the lives of all who knew him through his kindness, generosity and vivacious spirit. He will be deeply missed, but the memory of his character, intelligence and compassion will live on in those who knew and loved him. In pace requiescat, Red Dog. Well done, thou good and faithful servant; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, That we the Mayor and Members of the City of Chicago, assembled this thirty-first day of October, 2018 do hereby extend our most heartfelt condolences to the family of Ronald Charles Smith; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be prepared and presented to the family of Ronald Charles Smith as a sign of our honor, gratitude, and respect.

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HARRY OSTERMAN
Alderman, 48th Ward