



# City of Chicago



R2020-373

Office of the City Clerk

## Document Tracking Sheet

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	6/17/2020
<b>Sponsor(s):</b>	Sawyer (6)
<b>Type:</b>	Resolution
<b>Title:</b>	Tribute to late Tribute to late Dr. Conrad Worrill
<b>Committee(s) Assignment:</b>	

## **SALUTE TO THE LIFE AND WORK OF DR. CONRAD WORRILL**

WHEREAS, On June 3, 2020, this city, this state, and this nation lost one of its most distinguished and vocal advocates for the education, elevation, and empowerment of African Americans with the passing of Dr. Conrad Worrill who succumbed to cancer at the age of 78; and

WHEREAS, an erudite and prolific writer, educator, and activist, Dr. Worrill was also a talk show host for the WVON call-in program "On Target". He was a key strategist for Harold Washington's successful election as this city's first African-American mayor and an indefatigable champion of economic empowerment, the dismantling of educational inequities, and the reparations to the descendants of slaves; and

WHEREAS, although Conrad Worrill started life in Pasadena, California, he moved to this city when he was nine years old. His father, Walter F. Worrill, was active in the NAACP and an executive at the YMCA on South Wabash. The father was an athlete and had grown up with legendary baseball player Jackie Robinson, the first African American player in the National League. When Robinson made his debut at Wrigley field to play against the Cubs in 1947, only one month after being called up from the minors to play first base for the Brooklyn Dodgers, the senior Worrill invited Robinson to appear at his "Y". It was reported that "thousands and thousands of black people on the streets of Wabash, from 39th to 36th Street to see the first black man to break the NL's color barrier"; and

WHEREAS, greatly influenced by his father, Conrad Worrill attended Hyde Park Academy High School, where he became a track star remained an avid runner for the remainder of his life. He was influential in the development of the Gately Indoor Track & Field facility in the Pullman neighborhood. In 1962, Conrad was drafted into the army and stationed in Okinawa, Japan. It was during this time, he read much about African American history, culture, and politics. When he returned to America in 1963, he enrolled at George Williams College, majoring in Applied Behavioral Sciences. It was his army experience of seeing so many African Americans sent to war that led him to become active in the Black Power Movement. One of the organizations he joined the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the first African American civil rights group to oppose the Vietnam war.

WHEREAS, Dr. Conrad Worrill received a bachelor's degree from George Williams College in 1968 and was hired by a West Side YMCA as a program director but left to pursue a career as an academic and activist. He obtained his master's degree from the University of Chicago and a doctorate from the University of Wisconsin. Among his many positions, honors, and accolades, Dr. Worrill was named chairman emeritus and leader of the National Black United Front, served as a board member of the Black United Fund of Illinois, and on February 13, 2013 a portion of South Langley Avenue, from West Pershing Road to South Oakwood Boulevard, was dedicated as "Dr. Conrad Worrill Way"; and

WHEREAS, during his four-decade professorship at Northeastern Illinois University, Dr. Worrill educated people on black history and established as a foremost institution for the study of African American history, the Jacob H. Carruthers Center for Inner City Studies, where he lectured and served as its director. He was quoted by Sun-Times columnist Mary Mitchell as saying, "The goal of the center was to preserve the rich history of African people and to teach it from our own perspective and not the perspective of others"; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Conrad Worrill leaves behind to mourn his loss and revere his legacy his wife, Talibah; his daughters, Femi Skanes, Michelle Lanier, Sobenna Worrill and Kimberly King; his brother, Oscar Worrill; seven grandchildren; and a host of family members, friends and admirers; and

WHEREAS, The Honorable Roderick Sawyer, Alderman of the 6th Ward, has informed this august body of the death of this dynamic and remarkable champion of the African American citizen; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that we, the Mayor and members of the City of Chicago City Council, gathered together this 17<sup>th</sup> Day of June, 2020 AD, do hereby express our sincerest sorrow upon learning of the loss of Dr. Conrad Worrill and extend our deepest sympathies to the family, his many friends and all those whose lives he has touched.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and presented to the family of Dr. Conrad Worrill.

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RODERICK T. SAWYER  
Alderman - 6th Ward