



Office of the Chicago City
Clerk



R2012-457

Office of the City Clerk

City Council Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date: 4/18/2012
Sponsor(s): Laurino, Margaret (39)
Type: Resolution
Title: Congratulations extended to Geraldine Lawhorn
Committee(s) Assignment:

*CONGRATULATIONS EXTENDED TO GERALDINE LAWHORN ON BEING
NAMED THE 2012 RICHARD J. DALEY CITIZEN OF THE YEAR*

WHEREAS, Geraldine Lawhorn has been named the Richard J. Daley Citizen of the Year; and

WHEREAS, The Chicago City Council has been informed of this significant occasion by The Honorable Margaret Laurino, Alderman of the 39th Ward; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine Lawhorn, 95 years young, is an accomplished pianist, poetess, published author and educator - all four achievements being even more impressive - because she is deaf and blind; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine Lawhorn began to lose her eyesight at the age of seven, having completely lost it at the age of 12 and then at age of 19, she also lost her hearing; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine Lawhorn had to discontinue piano lessons because of her failing eyesight, but continued to play and sing popular music by ear; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine Lawhorn was enrolled in the Sight-Saving Room of Sherwood Grammar School at the age of twelve, where she learned to read Braille and began to write stories and articles, some for the school newspaper; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine Lawhorn joined a sewing class where she learned to knit and crochet, and a cap and scarf she had crocheted were exhibited at the Chicago World's Fair of 1933; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine Lawhorn started to lose her hearing when she entered John Marshall High School, so she learned the American Two-Hand Manual Alphabet and the American Two-Hand Alphabet; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine Lawhorn won third place in a contest for a short story she wrote which was entitled "The Gift" and was invited to City Hall to receive her medal from Mayor Edward Kelly; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine Lawhorn graduated with honors from Marshall High School, going on to study drama and music at the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago and the Carnegie Building in New York City; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine Lawhorn became an accomplished actress, poetess and pianist, appearing on a number of television programs, including "Someone You Should Know" in Chicago, The Phil Donahue Show, Good Morning America and Ripley's Believe It or Not; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine Lawhorn received numerous awards and honors, including the "Show Business" Magazine Award; induction into the Disabled Persons Hall of Fame of the City of Chicago, the Hadley School's Challenge of Living Award and the Anne Sullivan Macy Award for her artistic endeavors; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine Lawhorn published her autobiography, "On Different Roads," in 1991 and wrote the epilogue to C. Michael Mellor's 2006 book, "Louis Braille: A Touch of Genius"; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine Lawhorn was the first African-American deaf-blind person to earn a college degree, receiving a bachelor's degree from Northeastern Illinois University in 1983 graduating from the University Without Walls (UWW); and

WHEREAS, Geraldine Lawhorn received her Bachelor's Degree in Rehabilitation of Deaf-Blind Adults; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine Lawhorn became a teacher at The Hadley School for the Blind; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine Lawhorn has taught at The Hadley School for the Blind for over 45 years, earning her the 2011 Winnetka Teacher of the Year; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine Lawhorn has been treasurer of LeCobda, the Club of Blind-Deaf Adults in Chicago for a number of years; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine Lawhorn served on the Illinois Advisor Board of Services for Persons Who are Deaf-Blind, appointed by past Illinois Governor James Thompson; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine Lawhorn celebrated her 95th birthday in December of 2011 and received a Hadley Service Award for her 45 year teaching career with the Hadley School; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine Lawhorn continues to stress the importance of family in helping people who are deaf-blind and credits her own independence to the encouragement she received from her mother who was always there for her and helped to guide her along "the different road"; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine Lawhorn teaches her students from the privacy of her own home, corresponding via email, using a braille displacer to determine the content of the email; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine Lawhorn, as a part-time instructor, currently has approximately 100 students and has taught the concepts of poetry to more than 1,000 students over the years; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine Lawhorn was born during a difficult time in the history of our county - the 1920's and 1930's - being a female, a minority, and visually and hearing impaired; and

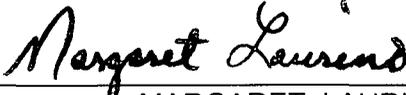
WHEREAS, Geraldine Lawhorn overcame a silent world through talent, perseverance and the sheer will to succeed and overcome the hand that life had dealt her; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine Lawhorn and Helen Keller have become an integral part of history; and

WHEREAS, Geraldine Lawhorn has touched many persons through her long and exemplary life, more than qualifying her for the recognition and award of the 2012 Richard J. Daley Citizen of the Year at the District 1A Lions Convention on April 1, 2012; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved, That we, the Mayor and members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, gathered here this eighteenth day of April, 2012, do hereby extend our heartiest congratulations to Geraldine Lawhorn on being named the 2012 Richard J. Daley Citizen of the Year at the District 1A Lions Convention on April 1, 2012, and wish her every success in all of her future endeavors; and

Be It Further Resolved, That a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and presented to Geraldine Lawhorn.


MARGARET LAURINO
Alderman, 39th Ward