



Office of the City Clerk

City Hall
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Chicago, IL 60602
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Legislation Text

File #: R2013-546, Version: 1

H resolution

adopted by C77ie (9ttt/ QoUHcil

of Qity of Qkicago, Illinois*

presented by MAYOR RAHM EMANUEL

on

JUNE 5, 2013

^Qh&fBCIS > The Members of this Chamber were deeply saddened to learn of the death on March 5, 2013, at age 86, of Dawn Clark Netsch, a longtime Illinois state senator and former Illinois comptroller, and the first woman to run for governor of Illinois as the candidate of a major political party; and

WHEREAS, Born Patricia Dawn Clark on September 16, 1926, Ms. Netsch was raised in Cincinnati, Ohio. Her father was in the construction business. Her mother was a social worker. As a young adult, Ms. Netsch moved to Evanston, Illinois, where she graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Northwestern University in 1948 with a degree in political science; and

WHEREAS, After graduating from college, Ms. Netsch attended Northwestern University School of Law, where she led the fight on campus to integrate the University's dormitories. In 1952, Ms. Netsch graduated first in her law school class; and

WHEREAS, Recognizing early on that the law provided a means to address social inequalities, and that politics was the route to change, Ms. Netsch began her professional life as a researcher and speechwriter for Illinois governor Adlai Stevenson during his 1952 presidential campaign, before joining the Washington, D.C. law firm of Covington & Burling, where she worked for two years. In 1954, Ms. Netsch returned to Chicago, where she served as a law clerk to U.S. District Court Judge Julius Hoffman and campaigned for Adlai Stevenson during his 1956 presidential bid. An active member of the Committee on Illinois Government, a group of independent Democrats, Ms. Netsch worked as an attorney in private practice until 1961, when she was appointed legal counsel to Illinois Governor Otto Kerner. Ms. Netsch was the first woman in Illinois history to hold that illustrious position; and

WHEREAS, In 1965, Ms. Netsch joined Northwestern University School of Law as its first female faculty member and as one of the first group of women law professors in the United States. At the time of her death, Ms. Netsch was a professor emeritus at Northwestern, where she taught courses and co-authored a widely used textbook on state and local government; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Netsch was elected in 1969 as a delegate to the 1970 Illinois Constitutional Convention. In 1972, she was elected to the Illinois General Assembly. During her 18-year tenure as a State senator, Ms. Netsch became an expert in state finances. A trailblazer in the political arena, Ms. Netsch sponsored the Equal Rights Amendment, argued against the death penalty, and worked tirelessly in favor of abortion rights, equality for the LGBT community, time off work for medical care of family members, government ethics reform, campaign reform, tax reform, the merit selection of judges, adequate funding for public education and banning handguns; and

WHEREAS, In 1990, when Ms. Netsch was elected as state comptroller, she became the highest-ranked woman in Illinois state government and the first woman elected to state constitutional executive office in Illinois. In 1994, Ms. Netsch again made history as the first woman elected on a major ticket to run for governor of Illinois; and

WHEREAS, An extraordinarily gifted, determined and patient person, who was widely admired for her intellect, tenacity, blunt honesty and independent spirit, Ms. Netsch was a woman of many "firsts," who left an indelible mark on the body politic during her more than six decades of service to the people of the Illinois; and

WHEREAS, Throughout her long and distinguished career in law and politics, Ms. Netsch's name remained synonymous with ethics and honest government. Most recently, Ms. Netsch served on the Illinois Task Force on Campaign Reform and Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel's Ethics Reform Task Force. In January of 2013, Ms. Netsch was honored by Planned Parenthood with a lifetime achievement award; and

WHEREAS, A playful and fun-loving person, with a twinkle in her eye and a self-deprecating sense of humor, Ms. Netsch loved opera, the Chicago White Sox, beer and champagne, Illinois sweet corn and a good game of pool; and

WHEREAS, A woman who set the standard for integrity in public service, Dawn Clark Netsch will always be remembered as a political pathfinder for generations of Illinois women; as a passionate and persistent fighter for progressive causes; and for her unwavering belief in good government, human rights and civil liberty; and

WHEREAS, Dawn Clark Netsch was preceded in death by her beloved husband of 45 years, Walter Netsch, who died in 2008; and is survived by her nephew, Andrew Kerr; one cousin; and a host of loving friends and admirers; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled this fifth day of June, 2013, do hereby honor the life and memory of Dawn Clark Netsch; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Dawn Clark Netsch as a sign of our sympathy and good wishes.

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO
RAHM EMANUEL MAYOR

June 5, 2013

TO THE HONORABLE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
CHICAGO

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I transmit herewith a resolution honoring the life and memory of Dawn Clark Netsch. Your favorable consideration of this resolution will be appreciated.

Mayor

Very truly yours,