



# Office of the City Clerk

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## Legislation Text

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### **OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**

CITY OF CHICAGO

LORI E. LIGHTFOOT<sup>MAYOR</sup>

June 23, 2021

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

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I transmit herewith, together with Aldermen Hopkins, Rodriguez, Villegas, Thompson, Sigcho-Lopez, Waguespaek, Vasquez, Lopez, hladden, Ervin, Martin, Osterman, Rodriguez, Sanchez, Burke, Dowell, Cappleman, Reilly, Rosa, Mitts, King, O'Shea, Nugent, Silverstein, Scott and Moore, a resolution honoring the life and memory of Bernie Wong, founder of Chicago Chinatown's Chinese American Service League.

Your favorable consideration of this resolution will be appreciated.

## RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The Members of this Body were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Bernarda "Bernie" Wong, co-founder and retired chief executive officer and president of the Chinese American Service League in Chicago, at age 77; and

WHEREAS, Bernie was born on October 24, 1943 in Hong Kong to the late Jorge Lo and Virginia Chia de Lo as the youngest of seven siblings; and

WHEREAS, Bernie immigrated to the United States at the age of 18 to study at Briar Cliff College in Sioux City, Iowa, before receiving a Master of Social Work degree from Washington University in St. Louis; and

WHEREAS, Inspired to dedicate her career to helping others, Bernie moved to Chicago to become a social worker. In the City's Chinatown, she became a champion for the neighborhood, as well as for immigrants, the elderly, and the poor; and

WHEREAS, Bernie co-founded the Chinese American Service League in 1978. Under Bernie's leadership, the organization became the largest social service agency serving Asian Americans in the Midwest; and

WHEREAS, From humble beginnings, the Chinese American Service League has grown to include programs for educating youth, caring for the elderly, training the workforce, placing immigrants on the path to citizenship, and securing housing and financial wellbeing for Asian Americans and Pacific Islander Americans; and

WHEREAS, Among her many trailblazing achievements, Bernie established a senior housing facility, since named the Albert and Bernie Wong Senior Living Community in her and her late husband's honor, and the Kam L. Liu Community Service Center; and

WHEREAS, Bernie served as a founding board member of the National Asian Pacific Center on Aging and the Chinese Immigrant Service Agencies Network International; chaired Mayor Richard M. Daley's Advisory Council on Asian Affairs; served on the Asian Advisory Council for governors Pat Quinn and Bruce Rauner and on the Chicago Commission on Human Relations Advisory Council on Equity; and was the first Asian American appointed to the boards of the United Way of Metropolitan Chicago and the Chicago Public Library; and

WHEREAS, Bernie was widely commended for her service and received numerous honors and awards, including special recognition from mayors Richard M. Daley, Rahm Emanuel, and Lori Lightfoot; Senator Dick Durbin; Governor JB Pritzker; and presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama, who named Bernie as one of his "Champions of Change"; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and the Members of the Chicago City Council, assembled this twenty-third day of June, 2021, do hereby honor the remarkable life and legacy of Bernarda Wong, and extend our most heartfelt condolences to her family and friends; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Bernarda Wong, as a token of our honor, gratitude, and respect.