



Office of the City Clerk

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Legislation Text

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TRIBUTE TO RALPH "MR. CANOE" FRESE

WHEREAS, God in His Infinite Wisdom and Judgment has called to his eternal rest Ralph "Mr. Canoe" Frese, beloved husband, loving father and dearest grandfather, Monday December 10, 2012, at the age of 86; and

WHEREAS, Ralph Frese and his wife Rita of suburban Niles, and owner of Chicagoland Canoe Base Shop located at the intersection of Irving Park and Narragansett Roads, designed beautiful watercraft canoes and kayaks, thus earning him the nickname "Mr. Canoe"; and

WHEREAS, Ralph Frese's love for canoes began at the age of 14 when he acquired his first watercraft, a used Mead Glider kayak, thereby beginning his journey of life on the rivers. "Mr. Canoe" began building boats in the early 1950s and introduced canoeing to countless numbers of Boy Scout troops; and

WHEREAS, Ralph Frese has donated more than 100 canoes and kayaks to the collection at the Chicago Maritime Museum, started the Illinois Paddling Council, and organized several long-running paddling events including the re-enactment of the 300th anniversary of the Joliet-Marquette journey; and

WHEREAS, Ralph Frese shared his knowledge, admiration and pleasure with thousands of novices and enthusiasts alike, in the experience of paddling a canoe or kayak as well as enjoying the sounds of the outdoors and river life. "Mr. Canoe" spread the message that the canoe was as important as the horse or railroad in the development of modern-day-America. Among the many accolades he received throughout his life, the one he most highly cherished was the "Legend of Paddling" award from the American Canoe Association; and

WHEREAS, Ralph Frese leaves to honor his memory and celebrate his life, his wife, Rita; his children, Diane Gritton, Valerie Fetcho and Chaz Clary; his sister, Gloria and four grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, The Honorable Timothy M. Cullerton, Alderman of the 38th Ward, has informed this august body of the passing of this noteworthy and caring man; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and members of the City of Chicago City Council, gathered together this 17th day of January, 2013 AD, do hereby express our sincerest sorrow on learning of the passing of Ralph "Mr. Canoe" Frese and extend our deepest condolence to his family and the many friends whose lives he touched.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and presented to the family of Ralph Frese.

TIMOTHY M. CULLERTO Alderman -
38th Ward