



# Office of the City Clerk

City Hall  
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## Legislation Text

**File #:** R2022-57, **Version:** 1

### MEMORIAL RESOLUTION CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF OTIS LEE CLAY

WHEREAS, On January 8, 2016, Otis Lee Clay, American R&B and gospel singer, Blues Hall of Fame inductee, and Chicago legend passed away at the age of 73; and

WHEREAS, Otis was born in Waxhaw, Mississippi to a musical family who moved to Muncie, Indiana in 1953 where he performed with local gospel group, the Voices of Hope; after spending some time back in Mississippi to sing with the Christian Travelers, Otis settled in Chicago in 1957; and

WHEREAS, In the City, Otis joined a series of gospel vocal groups before making his first solo secular recordings in 1962; he later joined the Gospel Songbirds, who recorded in Nashville in 1964; and

WHEREAS, In 1965, Otis signed with One-derful! Records in Chicago to make more secular recordings; after releasing a series of gospel-tinged soul records, his first hit came in 1967 with "That's How It Is (When You're In Love)" which reached #34 on the US Billboard R&B chart; and

WHEREAS, In 1968, Otis' contract was bought by Atlantic Records whose subsidiary Cotillion label released Otis' version of the Sir Douglas Quintet hit, "She's About A Mover" which became his biggest pop hit, reaching #97 on the Billboard Hot 100; and

WHEREAS, After multiple hits with other record companies, Otis recorded his fourth album, "The Only Way Is Up" in the early 1980s under his own Echo Records; throughout his musical career he remained a popular live act in Europe, Japan, and the United States and recorded three live albums; and

WHEREAS, In the late 1980s, Otis moved to the Westside of Chicago and later opened KTown cleaners at 4245 W. Cermak Road; he was actively involved in community-based economic and cultural initiatives and was Chairman of the Board of the non-profit, Tobacco Road, Inc., and was heavily involved in the extensive planning, fundraising, and development of The Harold Washington Cultural Center; and

WHEREAS, In 2015, Otis teamed up with Johnny Rawls and released "Soul Brothers", which won the Blues Blast Award for Soul Album of the Year; and

WHEREAS, Otis' adopted City will always remember him, not only for his ability to bring audiences around the world to their feet, but also for his tireless efforts to make his community a better place to live; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, gathered here this twenty sixth day of January, 2022, do hereby commemorate the life of the legendary Otis Lee Clay; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and presented to the family of Otis Lee Clay as a sign of our honor and respect.

MICHAEL D. RODRIGUEZ Alderman, 22nd  
Ward