



Office of the City Clerk

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Legislation Text

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RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Sunday, March 22, 2015, officially marks the 153rd Anniversary of the First Battle of Kernstown, the opening engagement of Confederate General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson's Shenandoah Campaign into Frederick County, Maryland and Winchester, Virginia in the early stages of the American Civil War; and

WHEREAS, Despite having suffered a broken arm as a result of an artillery blast, General James M. Shields, an Ulinoisan appointed to serve as Brigadier General in the Union Army by President Abraham Lincoln in December 1861, led his forces into battle and dealt General Jackson the only tactical defeat of his military career; and

WHEREAS, The Chicago City Council has been informed of this milestone by Alderman Edward M. Burke; and

WHEREAS, James Shields, a penniless Scots-Irish immigrant without resources arrived in the U.S. from County Tyrone, Ireland, in 1822; and

WHEREAS, James Shields moved west from Charleston, South Carolina to study law and to teach in a school for French-speaking settlers before commencing a law practice in the settlement of Kaskaskia, Illinois in 1832; and

WHEREAS, In 1836, James Shields was elected to the Illinois State Legislature as a Democrat from Randolph County, an area overwhelmingly Whig in its political sentiments; and

WHEREAS, James Shields was twice elected State Auditor of Public Accounts, serving the people of Illinois in this capacity from 1839-1843; and

WHEREAS, After James Shields relocated to Springfield, Illinois he accepted an appointment from Governor Thomas Ford to a seat on the State Supreme Court in 1845, replacing Stephen A. Douglas who had just been elected to Congress; and

WHEREAS, President James K. Polk commissioned James Shields a General in command of the Illinois Regiment during the Mexican War; and

WHEREAS, General Shields sustained a serious chest wound in the Battle of Cerro Gordo but recuperated in time to lead the New York Irish and South Carolina Palmettos to decisive victories in major battles at Churubusco, Chapultepec, and Mexico City; and

WHEREAS, For gallantry in the field of combat, General Shields was brevetted to Major-General and returned home to Illinois a national hero; and

WHEREAS, James Shields was mustered out of the service in 1849, and in that same year President Polk appointed him the Territorial Governor of Oregon; and

WHEREAS, James Shields had to decline the appointment because days later, the people of Illinois elected him to the U.S. Senate partly to recognize and honor his war-time service; and

WHEREAS, After James Shields was defeated in his 1855 re-election bid, he relocated to Minnesota where he founded the town of Shieldsville; and

WHEREAS, James Shields served an abbreviated term of office as the junior Senator from Minnesota, May 11, 1858 through March 4, 1859, before settling in San Francisco in August 1860 to serve as Railroad Commissioner of California; and

WHEREAS, James Shields accepted a commission to serve as Brigadier General of the 2nd Division of V Corps in the Army of the Potomac from President Abraham Lincoln in Washington D.C. in December 1861; and

WHEREAS, James Shields, serving under General Nathaniel Banks, distinguished himself in the field of honor; and

WHEREAS, The day after the Battle of Kernstown, James Shields received a battlefield promotion to Major-General; and

WHEREAS, Suffering from, his war wounds, James Shields resigned his commission on March 28, 1863 and returned home to California to launch a mining venture in Mexico; and

WHEREAS, James Shields moved his family from California to Carrollton, Missouri in 1866 to practice law and lecture; and

WHEREAS, In 1879, James Shields was elected by the Missouri Legislature to fill the vacated seat of United States Senator Lewis V. Bogy, who had passed away; and

WHEREAS, James Shields' service in the 46th Congress distinguishes him as the only person in the nation's history to represent three different states as a U.S. Senator; and

WHEREAS, James Shields passed away in Ottumwa, Iowa on June 1, 1879; and

WHEREAS, James Shields represents the State of Illinois in the National Statuary Hall in the Capitol Building in Washington D.C.; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and the members of the Chicago City Council assembled this eighteenth day of March, 2015, do hereby declare March 22, 2015, James Shields Day in Chicago to recognize a distinguished jurist, soldier and statesman who brought honor to the State of Illinois..

Alderman Edward M. Burke
Alderman, 14th Ward