



Office of the City Clerk

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Legislation Text

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CONGRATULATIONS EXTENDED TO REVEREND DR. LEROYSANDERS ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT

WHEREAS, After 35 years, Reverend Dr. Leroy Sanders is retiring as Senior Pastor at Kenwood United Church of Christ on October 31, 2015; and

WHEREAS, The City Council has been informed of this special occasion by The Honorable William D. Burns, Alderman of the 4th Ward; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Sanders has had a long and distinguished career. Born and raised in Chicago, Pastor Sanders was a member of Progressive Community Church, 56 East 48th Street from childhood until he studied under Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Wright, Jr., at Trinity United Church of Christ (TUCC), prior to his installation as Senior Pastor at Kenwood United Church of Christ (KUCC) in September of 1980; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Sanders served in the US Army and later began a long career at Illinois Bell eventually rising to supervisory positions in which he often served as the first African-American in the position. As he neared retirement, he went to school while still working to receive his B.S. degree from Chicago State University and then his Master of Divinity degree from Chicago Theological Seminary. He then came to KUCC as he was retiring from Illinois Bell; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Sander's early tenure as Senior Pastor saw the beginning of rebuilding a congregation and rebuilding its deteriorating building, a process seen as impossible by many in the UCC denomination. He persevered and with the help of other UCC churches, particularly TUCC, and the gathering of community support, the church thrived. Membership rose from less than 25 when he arrived to its current level of nearly 400. He oversaw the upkeep in the church building and invested approximately \$750,000 in the building's infrastructure allowing the church to stay open seven days a week. Under his stewardship the church became listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1991 and achieved City of Chicago Landmark designation in 2013. The edifice proudly stands today, as a reminder of its long service in North Kenwood; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Sanders developed key ministries that served the community as it changed over the past 35 years. When he saw that people were homeless and displaced, he founded the "Feeding the People" program to provide a free clothes closet, food pantry and sanitary facilities. When Woodlawn Hospital closed, Pastor Sanders led the fight to open a community health clinic at KUCC, named after his late wife Norma Jean Sanders. When he saw his ministry's population aging, he founded an active Senior Ministry that has thrived for many years and he instituted the first African-American parish nurse program focusing on illness prevention. When he noticed the lack of opportunities for young residents, he developed popular youth programs. These ministries have helped the community stay strong in the face of rising housing costs and neighborhood change that

have severely limited choices of housing and services for longtime residents of North Kenwood; and

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WHEREAS, Pastor Sanders has also played a leading role in the civil rights movement and patient rights activities in the United Church of Christ, the Kenwood community, and with Advocate Health Care systems governance, recently at Advocate Trinity Hospital. Pastor Sanders is the father of five children and grandfather of 18 with several great grandchildren. His late spouse, Norma Jean Sanders, was his active partner in his pastorate until she passed away in 2006; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Leroy Sanders has honorably served his Kenwood community, his church and the city of Chicago with the utmost of professionalism. May his strong dedication and faith continue to serve as an inspiration to us all; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved, That we, the Mayor and members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled this eighteenth day of November, 2015, do hereby extend our heartiest congratulations to Pastor Leroy Sanders on the occasion of his retirement and wish him every success in any and all of his future endeavors; and
William D. Burns Alderman, 4th Ward

Be It Further Resolved, That a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and presented to Reverend Dr. Leroy Sanders.

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