



# Office of the City Clerk

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## Legislation Text

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### RESOLUTION \J

WHEREAS, Lois Weisberg was born Lois Porges in Chicago on May 6, 1925, to Mortimer and Jessie Porges and raised in the Austin neighborhood, having attended Austin High School, the University of Illinois, and graduating from the Northwestern School of Speech; and

WHEREAS, Lois Weisberg founded numerous organizations and publications, including Friends of the Park, South Shore Recreation, the Chicago Lawyer newspaper, The Paper, an alternative weekly newspaper, and the Chicago chapter of the George Bernard Shaw Society; and

WHEREAS, prior to entering government, Lois Weisberg was active in the non-profit arena, having served as Director of Development for the Business and Professional People for the Public Interest, and as Executive Director for the Chicago Council of Lawyers; and

WHEREAS, in 1983, Lois Weisberg was appointed by Mayor Harold Washington to head the City's Office of Event Planning, a position she held for four years; and

WHEREAS, in 1989, upon Mayor Richard M. Daley's creation of the Department of Cultural Affairs, Lois Weisberg was appointed Commissioner, a position she served for over two decades, retiring in 2011; and

WHEREAS, in 1991, as Commissioner of the Department of Cultural Affairs, Lois Weisberg oversaw the transformation of the former central location of the Chicago Public Library into what is now the Chicago Cultural Center; and

WHEREAS, as Commissioner of the Department of Cultural Affairs, Lois Weisberg led the creation of major cultural attractions, many of which still continue today, including the Chicago Blues Festival, the Chicago Gospel Festival, the "Cows on Parade" in 1999, Gallery 37 student art program in 1991, which later became After School Matters, and the Chicago Holiday Sharing It Program; and

WHEREAS, in 1999, Lois Weisberg was profiled by Malcolm Gladwell for a New Yorker article, titled "Six Degrees of Lois Weisberg," where Gladwell stated "Lois knows lots of people because she likes lots of people. And all those people Lois knows and likes invariably like her, too..." And such friends and connections have included Isaac Asimov, Tony Bennett, Lenny Bruce, Arthur C. Clarke, John Coltrane, Ralph Ellison, William Friedkin, Dizzy Gillespie, Allen Ginsberg, Robert Heinlein, Yo-Yo Ma, Thelonious Monk, Nichelle Nichols, and Congressman Sidney Yates; and

WHEREAS, Lois Weisberg was bestowed numerous awards and recognitions, including the League of Women Voters Civic Contribution Award, Governing Magazine's Public Official of the Year Award, the Harold Washington History Maker Award, an honorary doctorate from the Spertus Institute, the Chicago Tribune's Chicagoan of the Year award, was declared the first Legendary Landmark by the Landscape Preservation Council of Illinois, and was the recipient of one of the City's inaugural Fifth Star Award in 2014; and

WHEREAS, on January 13, 2016, Lois Weisberg passed away at the age of 90, and is survived by her three children, Kiki Ellenby, Jacob Weisberg, and Joseph Weisberg, eight grandchildren and three great grandchildren, as well as her sister June Rosner; Weisberg's daughter, Jerilyn Fyffe passed away in 2011; and

WHEREAS, the City of Chicago intends to designate a suitable commemoration to honor Lois Weisberg in order to ensure that her legacy is never forgotten; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that we would encourage the Chicago Cultural Center, located at 78 East Washington Street, be renamed in Lois Weisberg's honor, in recognition of the achievements of Lois Weisberg, and as a symbol of the esteem in which Lois Weisberg is held by the Mayor, the City Council, and residents of the City of Chicago.