



Office of the City Clerk

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Legislation Text

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MEMORIAL RESOLUTION FOR KENNETH L. HARRIS

WHEREAS, in His infinite wisdom, Almighty God has granted eternal peace to Kenneth L. Harris on February 17, 2019 at the age of 89; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has been informed of his passing by the Honorable Anthony Beale, Alderman of the 9th Ward; and

WHEREAS, Kenneth was born on June 18, 1929, at St. Luke Hospital in Chicago to loving parents, James Leo and Nettie Thelma Harris; and

WHEREAS, Kenneth and his younger brother Ronald William accepted Christ at an early age and were members of the Carey Temple AME Church. They both attended Sherwood Elementary School and there Kenneth established his independence. He was enrolled in Tilden Technical High School, where he studied Engineering and graduated in 1947. Tilden was outside of the neighborhood and he often spoke of having to run home from school on a regular basis. That running paved the way for him to earn a track scholarship to Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. After one year he came back home, where he was needed to assist his mother who had just purchased a two flat in Park Manor; and

WHEREAS, Kenneth took a job working as a dining car waiter on the Burlington Railroad after returning to Chicago. He greatly enjoyed talking with people. His travels with the railroad broadened his experiences and enlivened the stories that he loved to tell; and

WHEREAS, the United States owes an eternal debt of gratitude to Kenneth for his service in the military. In 1953, he enlisted in the United States Army, joining his brother Ronald, serving during the Korean War. Kenneth was stationed in Japan and often talked of his time there. In 1955 after being honorably discharged, he returned home to work a variety of jobs before being hired at the U.S. Post Office. Most importantly, he returned to woo the girl next door, Delores; and

WHEREAS, on December 17, 1960, he married the love of his life, Delores Murphy, who lived in her father's building next door. The newlyweds moved to the 2nd floor on Vernon where they continued to live for more than 50 years. Marrying Delores meant Kenneth got a wife and daughter, Freddrenna; seven brother-in-laws and four sister-in-laws. One year later, Katrinka Leonnie joined the family and in 1963 Michael Kenneth was born. Kenneth made sure to tell his children how hard his mother worked so that they were never hungry. The moral of the story being "don't waste that food." Over the years friends and family lived on the 1st floor, including Ronald and Geraldine Harris; Don and Delores Cornelius; the Lawshea Family; and Mary and Keith Murphy. From day one it was a family building and everyone that came regularly or rented became family; and

WHEREAS, Kenneth worked a second shift at General Motors Electro-Motors Division for 30 years, Delores saw to it that Kenneth was a good provider and Delores was a wonderful mother and nurturer. She planned the holidays and he carved the turkey. Delores told the family they were all part of the family; and

and he drove the car. Together they provided a

safe and welcoming space for their children, their family and their children's friends. Although he was continually yelling at them to close the door, the door was closed to no one; and

WHEREAS, family was the most important constant in Kenneth's life. He stressed proper behavior, respecting self and others, and getting as much education as you could. While his own education was cut short, he continued to learn by reading multiple papers and keeping up with current events. If you visited the home, you saw proudly displayed on the mantel, swim medals, baseball or basketball trophies or most importantly, graduation pictures. When he was working, his work schedule had limited the time he spent with his children. Once he retired, Kenneth transformed into the consummate doting grandad; from watching swim meets; school concerts; Little League or basketball games; and driving children to and from school, Mr. Harris, as the adults called him and Paw Paw as the kids called him, was ever present; and

WHEREAS, Kenneth leaves to cherish his memories; his loving daughters, Freddrenna M. Lyle, Katrinka L. Haris-Spurlin (Elijah Spurlin); dedicated son Michael Kenneth Harris, Sr.; treasured grandchildren, LaChelle D. Harris, Michael Kenneth Harris, Jr., Annina D. Harris, LaTasha Binion, LaToya Johnson, and Angelo Howard, Sr., two sister-in-laws, Jaqueline Murphy and Joyce Frazier; Great grandchildren, Kyndle Shegog, Jada Samuels, Tyler Samuels, Angelo Howard, Jr, and a host of nieces, nephews, and extended family, neighbors, friends and one special neighbor Prentiss A. McDaniel, Jr; and

WHEREAS, Kenneth was preceded in death by his parents, brother, Ronald, and his beloved wife, Delores; and

WHEREAS, Kenneth touched the lives of all those who knew him through his kindness, generosity, and vivacious spirit. He will be deeply missed, but the memory of his genuine character, vast intelligence, and compassion will live on in those who knew and loved him, leaving a legacy of faith, dignity, and love; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Mayor and members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, gathered here this thirteenth day of March, 2019, do hereby express our sorrow on the death of Kenneth Leo Harris and express to his family and friends our deepest sympathy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and presented to the family of Kenneth Leo Harris as a sign of our honor, gratitude and respect.

ANFRIONY A. BEALE Alderman, 9th Ward