



Office of the City Clerk

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Legislation Text

File #: R2020-486, Version: 1

RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE OF RAMONA ROUSE

WHEREAS, Ramona Rouse was born on September 15, 1964, in the Old Town neighborhood of Chicago and moved with her family to Lincoln Square in 1981 as the first wave of black families to arrive in north side neighborhoods in newly built, court-mandated integrated, scattered-site public housing. She endured endless racist and sexist taunts as a young adult, yet she persevered.

WHEREAS, Struggling against the odds as a single mom, she worked hard to provide her children with a stellar education and provided her trademark unconditional love and nurturing. In 1994, Ramona Rouse removed her son from his school when he was assaulted in a school hallway by a security guard and bullied by students and teachers for being gay. Working around the clock, Ramona was able to find a better fit for her child. It took months of hard work and two more school enrollments for her son to become a consistent straight-A student by 7th grade. Ramona was a force for her children's education.

WHEREAS, In 1995, at 31 years old and with a two-year-old daughter in tow, Ramona took a 16-week entrepreneur class at the Women's Self Employment Project. Upon completion, she opened her own salon, Salon Pastiche, in Rogers Park on a gritty block right off the "EL." Ramona worked hard over many years to build up a diverse clientele comprised of a broad swath of northside residents and professionals. A neighboring art gallery owner said about Ramona after her passing, "Ramona was a point of light on our block in Rogers Park, with a magnetic smile for us every time we overlapped in our next-door storefronts."

WHEREAS, Her many diverse clients over the years loved coming to her bright and charming storefront salon to talk to Ramona and to get a fresh look. Rogers Park resident Jesse Wolfson said about Ramona in a 2012 Timeout Chicago write up on the salon, "She's an easy and interesting conversationalist, which makes the cut a lot more enjoyable." Her salon served neighborhood residents, nearby Loyola students and even the occasional celebrity, such as Deion Sanders and the late South African singer Miriam Makeba. As her landlord once said about her, she brought many good things to the block over the years and held on as the neighborhood picked up and the adjacent storefronts became occupied.

WHEREAS, She supported many African-owned small businesses in the area over the years. She only asked that young people and her kids "make a difference" and "do the things she wasn't able to do" when she was their age. That is her beautiful legacy. Her legacy also is the friendship and vivid memories of countless clients, local families, and students, and small business owners and community members she touched and befriended over many years. Ramona's family were pioneers on the North Side at a time when black people were unwelcome. She ran her salon for 25 years at 1226 W. Loyola until her untimely death on January 4, 2020, after an illness.
Alderwoman Maria Hadden, 49th Ward

BE IT RESOLVED, That the City Council of the City of Chicago recognizes the value, sacrifice, and contributions of Ramona Rouse.