



Office of the City Clerk

City Hall
121 N. LaSalle St.
Room 107
Chicago, IL 60602
www.chicityclerk.com

Legislation Text

File #: R2020-1076, **Version:** 1

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY OF CHICAGO

LORI E. LIGHTFOOT
MAYOR

December 16, 2020

TO THE HONORABLE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I transmit herewith a resolution regarding the retirement of Tim Samuelson, the City' cultural historian.

Your favorable consideration of this resolution will be appreciated.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, With hearts full of best wishes for his future, mixed with regret to see him leave, the Members of this Chamber are pleased to congratulate Tim Samuelson, Chicago's Official Cultural Historian, on the occasion of his retirement from the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events; and

WHEREAS, Born in Evanston, Illinois, and raised in Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood, Mr. Samuelson developed his love of history and architecture at age 7 after seeing a picture of the Carson Pirie Scott building in his grandmother's Reader's Digest; and

WHEREAS, After graduating from Sullivan High School, Mr. Samuelson attended Roosevelt University, where he majored in English. On his college application, Mr. Samuelson indicated that he wished to attend Roosevelt University primarily because it housed the Auditorium Theatre, designed by architects Dankmar Adler and Louis Sullivan with assistance from a young Frank Lloyd Wright. As an undergraduate student, Mr. Samuelson frequently snuck into the theatre, which was undergoing renovation, where he befriended the laborers working there, and quietly worked behind the scenes to clean its mosaics and to save bits of its discarded edifice; and

WHEREAS, Early in Mr. Samuelson's career, Chicago preservationist and photographer Richard Nickel brought Mr. Samuelson along with him on expeditions to salvage fragments of historic buildings that were scheduled for demolition. Inspired by these forays, Mr. Samuelson became a researcher and writer for Chicago preservationist and architect John Vinci. In the 1980s, he joined the staff of the Commission on Chicago Landmarks before accepting a position as curator of architecture and design at the Chicago History Museum; and

WHEREAS, In 2002, Chicago's Cultural Affairs Commissioner Lois Weisberg was so impressed by Mr. Samuelson's capacity for learning and sharing Chicago's history that she created the post of "Official Cultural Historian of the City of Chicago" and named Mr. Samuelson to the position, directing him to "help everybody." Taking those words to heart, Mr. Samuelson freely shared his energy and knowledge with fellow historians, businesses, journalists, foreign delegations, tourists and other persons interested in learning more about Chicago's history and how best to preserve it; and

WHEREAS, Over the course of his stellar eighteen-year career as Chicago's first and only cultural historian, Mr. Samuelson had a hand in preserving or restoring the main lobby of Union Station; Chess Records on South Michigan Avenue, Pilgrim Baptist Church and various other sites in Bronzeville vital to Black history; Walt Disney's birthplace in Hermosa; the American School of Correspondence and the Robie House in Hyde Park; the Waller Apartments in East Garfield Park; and the Carson Pirie Scott building in downtown Chicago, to name but a few; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Samuelson curated or organized several memorable exhibits at the Chicago Cultural Center, including "Mecca Flat Blues" (2014); "Wright Before the 'Lloyd '"

(2013); "Louis Sullivan's Idea" (2010); "Isn't That Amazing! The Appeal and Spiel of Ronco and Popeil" (2004); and "Teddy Bears on Parade" (2003); and

WHEREAS, A walking encyclopedia of Chicago history and the author of numerous books and magazine articles on architecture and historic preservation, Mr. Samuelson has lectured at Harvard University, New York's Museum of Modern Art, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. In 2015, Landmarks Illinois, a not-for-profit preservation group, designated Mr. Samuelson himself as a "Legendary Landmark" in recognition of his many contributions to our City's cultural landscape; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled this sixteenth day of December, 2020, do hereby congratulate Tim Samuelson on the occasion of his retirement from City service; express our heartfelt gratitude for his many years of exemplary service to the residents of our great City; and extend to him our best wishes for continued health, happiness, prosperity and success; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to Tim Samuelson as a sign of our appreciation and esteem.