



Legislation Text

File #: R2021-11, Version: 1

Resolution

adopted by The City Council of the City of Chicago, Illinois

BIRTHDAY SALUTE TO DJ LEGEND SAM CHATMAN

WHEREAS, on January 18, renowned Chicago DJ Sam Chatman, an outstanding citizen and member of his community, celebrates the start of another trip around the sun; and

WHEREAS, Sam Chatman has been this city's preeminent "Steppin'" dance event promoter and DJ for more than five decades. "I was just a CTA bus driver. It was all about the music," Sam says about himself. "I loved the music. I can't tell you how or why I got involved"; and

WHEREAS, Sam started out by listening to other DJ's when he went to parties and clubs. From the first house party he promoted, he was the DJ and continues to promote and spin at his own parties. It was Sam Chatman that first coined the term "steppin'". This would be the hallmark of the city's West Side events he started promoting that were held at the Keyman's Club in the Knights of Columbus Hall on 4711 W. Madison; and

WHEREAS, by the time Sam Chatman moved from the West Side to the South Side in 1974, his Friday night Keyman's Club set was the number one steppers event in the city. He now needed establish his brand on the South Side. While driving one night, he noticed a group young people going to a college affair in the basement of an old Masonic Hall on South Michigan Avenue and 109th Street that Sam dubbed the Dungeon. It wasn't long before he established a steppin' set there on Sundays; and

WHEREAS, one Sunday, Sam Chatman told his south side steppers he wanted to take them to the West Side's Keyman Club set the following Friday. Although rival gang affiliations of the era made it seem impossible, Sam assured them there would be no trouble because he was well-known, well-liked and trusted on both the West and the South Sides. From the first, Sam was able to broker a deal so steppers from any side of the city would be safe and welcomed. No one was ever shot or killed at any of Sam Chatman's steppen' sets; and

WHEREAS, of all the steppin' sets that Sam Chatman promoted and DJed at McCormick Place, McCormick Inn or the Pick-Congress, there was never an incident. For more than two decades, young African American men and women were able to travel on the North, West and South Sides to attend steppin' sets anywhere without experiencing any gang retaliation. Many rival steppers started out at DJ Sam Chatman's sets and became lifelong friends. A lot of lives have been saved and families have been created because of Sam's steppin' sets; and

WHEREAS, The Honorable Roderick Sawyer, Alderman of the 6th Ward, and a stepper himself, considers Sam Chatman one of his personal heroes and has apprised this august body of the remarkable history of this extraordinary DJ and Chicago treasure on the occasion of his birthday; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and members of the City of Chicago City Council, gathered this 27th day of January, 2021 AD, do hereby express our heartiest congratulations on the occasion of Sam Chatman's birthday and extend our very best wishes for continued success in all he seeks to accomplish.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and presented to Sam Chatman.

RODERICK T. SAWYER
Alderman - 6th Ward