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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY OF CHICAGO

LORI E. LIGHTFOOT

MAYOR

January 27, 2021

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

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I transmit herewith a resolution honoring the life and memory of Dr. Manford Byrd. Your favorable consideration of this resolution will be appreciated.

Very truly yours,

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The Members of this Body were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Dr. Manford Byrd, Jr., a dedicated educator, beloved citizen, loving husband, and devoted father, on January 17, 2021; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Byrd was born on May 29, 1928 in Brewton, Alabama to Manford Byrd Sr. and Evelyn Turk Byrd; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Byrd earned a degree in Mathematics in 1949 from Central College in Pella, Iowa, where he played on the College's baseball and basketball teams. Dr. Byrd earned a Master's Degree in Education from Atlanta University in 1954, and a Doctorate Degree in Education from Northwestern University in 1978. Dr. Byrd maintained a strong allegiance to Northwestern University for the rest of his life; and

WHEREAS, A devoted educator, Dr. Byrd began his career in education teaching in Quincy, Illinois from 1949-1954 before accepting a teaching position in Chicago, where he dedicated the rest of his life; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Byrd and Cheribelle Byrd were united in holy matrimony on March 31, 1956, at St. Barbara's Church in Bridgeport; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Byrd dedicated his career and his life's work to educating the children of Chicago in the Chicago Public School system as a teacher, assistant principal, elementary and high school principal and assistant to the General Superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, In 1968, Dr. Byrd was appointed Deputy Superintendent and Chief Operating Officer of Chicago Public Schools, at the relatively young age of 39, making Dr. Byrd one of the highest ranking African American public sector leaders in the nation; and

WHEREAS, Through his exceptional talent, determination and hard work, Dr. Byrd overcame racial obstacles to achieve a well-earned promotion as General Superintendent in 1985, two years after his friend and colleague, the late Harold Washington, was elected mayor of Chicago; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Byrd served the children and families of Chicago with distinction as General Superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools until 1989, enhancing both the academic excellence and the infrastructure of the Chicago Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Byrd retired from the Chicago Public Schools after 41 years of selfless service in education with 35 years of service in the Chicago Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Byrd was the recipient of over 100 awards and commendations for excellence in teaching and academic administration, including honorary doctoral degrees from Central College, Hope College and the National College of Education. Dr. Byrd was also recognized by the History Makers, an organization committed to preserving and making widely accessible the stories of well-known African Americans; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Byrd's fierce dedication to public education also extended to his service to the community on many boards and organizations, including the Chicago State University Foundation, Joint Negro Appeal, the Mid-America Chapter of the American Red Cross, the

Chicago NAACP, the United Church Board for World Ministries, the University of Illinois Chicago Urban Health Programs, the Board of Trustees of Central College and the Adler Planetarium in Chicago; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Byrd's life journey of 92 years was rooted in his deep abiding faith. He was a charter member of the Trinity United Church of Christ (founded 1961) and in 1981, the church established the annual Dr. Manford Byrd Jr. Black Value System - Educational Scholarship in his honor; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Byrd is survived by his loving wife of 64 years, Cheribelle Byrd; his three sons and daughters-in-law, Carl (Beverly), Bradley (Stephanie) and Donald (Julie); eight grandchildren, one great-grandson and a host of other family members and friends; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Byrd touched the lives of all who knew him through his kindness, his generosity, his heart and his spirit. He will be deeply missed, but the memory of his outstanding service, character and compassion will live on in those who knew and loved him; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, gathered here this 27th day of January, 2021, do hereby acknowledge Dr. Manford Byrd, Jr.'s outstanding achievements and many years of service, and extend our most heartfelt condolences to his family and friends; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be presented to the family of Dr. Manford Byrd, Jr., as a sign of our sympathy, honor, gratitude, and respect.