



Office of the City Clerk

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Legislation Text

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CONGRATULATIONS EXTENDED KEVIN J. BELL ON HIS RETIRMENT AS THE PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE LINCOLN PARK ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY

WHEREAS, Kevin J. Bell, devoted advocate, leader, and supporter of zoos across the world, will retire from his role as President and CEO of the Lincoln Park Zoological Society at the end of 2021, after 26 years in that role and 46 total years of service at the Zoo; and

WHEREAS, The Chicago City Council has been informed of this occasion by the Honorable Michele Smith, Alderman of the 43rd Ward; and

WHEREAS, Kevin grew up on the grounds of the Bronx Zoo - literally - where he started his lifelong work with animals at the age of 10, first working as a volunteer, and later becoming a part-time animal caretaker at 17, and a keeper at 20; and

WHEREAS, In 1976, at the age of 23, Kevin came to Chicago's Lincoln Park Zoo as Curator of Birds, the youngest curator ever hired at the Zoo, and in 1993 he was named Assistant Director and became Director that same year; on January 1, 1995, upon the Lincoln Park Zoo's privatization, Kevin became the President and CEO of the Lincoln Park Zoological Society; and

- WHEREAS, Under Kevin's tenure, the Lincoln Park Zoo has thrived as an urban oasis driven by science and a commitment to animal care, horticulture, conservation, education, and connecting people to nature; Kevin's many accomplishments include building a team of more than 40 scientists and establishing the Urban Wildlife Institute to help the public understand how to coexist with wildlife and create more wildlife-friendly cities, establishing the Nature Boardwalk, and solidifying the commitment to keep the Lincoln Park Zoo free to the general public; and

WHEREAS, Kevin also played an instrumental role in the two most ambitious capital campaigns in the history of the Lincoln Park Zoo's history: the Heart-of-the-Zoo campaign and the My Kind of Zoo campaign, which together raised more than \$125 million in capital for renovation and new construction at the zoo, and built an endowment to secure the Zoo for future generations - thanks to his vision, the oldest zoo in America is also the newest, with every building either having been newly constructed or renovated since 1982; and

WHEREAS, Kevin's passion for animals and zoos extends beyond the walls of the Lincoln Park Zoo; in addition to receiving the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) President's Award in 2005 for raising more than \$1 million in relief funds for zoos and aquariums affected by Hurricane Katrina, Kevin has served as a member of the AZA since 1976, he served on the Wildlife Conservation Management Committee and, in 1996 he was named Chairman of the Privatization Task Force which produced the AZA's first reference book for member institutions contemplating a governance change; and

WHEREAS, Kevin was elected to the AZA Board in 2007 and assumed the role of Chair from 2009 to 2010, he published numerous articles in the International Zoo Yearbook and other publications, and in 2011, was selected as one of the three U.S. delegates to serve on the board of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums; and

WHEREAS, Kevin's skills, expertise, and passion will be greatly missed at the Lincoln Park Zoo; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, gathered here this 14th day of October, 2021, do hereby congratulate Kevin J. Bell on his retirement from the Lincoln Park Zoological Society, thank him for his years of dedicated service, and express out heartiest wishes on a pleasant retirement; and

MICHELE SMITH Alderman, 43th Ward

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and presented to Kevin J. Bell.