



# Office of the City Clerk

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[www.chicityclerk.com](http://www.chicityclerk.com)

## Legislation Text

File #: R2022-942, Version: 1

### JAMES CAPPLEMAN Alderman, 46th Ward

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### Paul Lisnek Day in the City of Chicago

WHEREAS, Paul M. Lisnek, J.D., Ph.D. has dedicated his life and career to educating others, giving back to his community and passionate interests, and encouraging others to do the same; and,

WHEREAS, he believes that, fundamentally, when we receive gifts and achieve success from our education and professional pursuits, that each of us should make a considerable effort during our lives to create a better community, state and nation for all; and,

WHEREAS, Dr. Paul M. Lisnek believes in making a difference by giving back and helping others to follow in the footsteps of success and he models that life philosophy every day in a variety of ways and through a multitude of means; and,

WHEREAS, Paul grew up in Skokie, IL and after completing his education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, has lived and worked in the City of Chicago for his entire adult life, with no plans to ever leave this city he calls home; and,

WHEREAS, acknowledging that his significant success is owed to his educational background and related interests, Paul has long dedicated and prioritized his time and financial resources to make a difference for others in those very areas; and,

WHEREAS, he demonstrated early signs of his leadership ability by serving a President of the Student Body at Niles North High School in Skokie, IL, which is something never achieved by any student; and,

WHEREAS, Paul served as the student representative to the Parent-Teacher-Student Association, including serving as Chairperson of the Critical Ways and Means Committee, and was honored with Paul Lisnek Day at the school prior to his graduation; and,

WHEREAS, he was voted Most Likely to Succeed and Friendliest Male, and delivered the keynote address at his class graduation in 1976, and was later invited back by the principal the following year to be a "surprise" Homecoming speaker; and,

WHEREAS, Paul attended the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where in 1980, he earned a BA in Communication, a BA in Political Science, and a Master of Arts in Communication, and he completed his studies for two BAs in only 3 years and his MA in only 1 year. Paul then completed his Juris Doctor in 1983; and,

WHEREAS, while a full time law and Ph.D. student in 1980, Paul was the teaching assistant for a course in Legal Communication, and he took over the main instruction after the tenured

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professor suffered a heart attack in the middle of the course. Paul continued to teach the class in subsequent semesters and the class grew in size to become the second most popular class in the entire Communication Department. He continued to teach that class through 1985. He taught courses in Public Speaking, Interpersonal Relations, Research Skills, Negotiation, and Law and Communication, and was selected as the finalist as Best Teacher on the entire University of Illinois Campus; and,

WHEREAS, Dr. Paul Lisnek is best known today for his respected and popular work on television and radio focusing on politics, law, and theater; and,

WHEREAS, Paul began his professional career as a practicing lawyer in 1983 at the law firm of Johnson, Cusack and Bell and was pried away to join an off-shoot firm after 2 years called O'Connor and Schiff where he stayed until he was invited to apply for an academic position; and,

WHEREAS, in 1986, Paul applied for and was hired as an Assistant Dean and Lecturer in Law at Loyola School of Law, where it is believed he was among the youngest people to ever serve in a dean role (at age 26). He took on teaching duties including courses in litigation, negotiation, interviewing, counseling and ethics. He remained in this position until 1992. Paul also advised and counseled all law students in the areas of career and professional development; and,

WHEREAS, during his years as an academic, Paul also served as a Visiting Professor for several summers at Pepperdine University School of Law in the Institute for Conflict Resolution; he also taught numerous courses in Chicago at both Loyola University's School of Communication and DePaul University's Department of English and Communication; and,

WHEREAS, in 1987, Paul became interested in the newly burgeoning field called Jury or Trial Consulting. Paul became one of the very first (at that time) trial consultants holding both a Ph.D. and Law degree. He was affiliated with consulting firms that took many noteworthy cases such as the O.J. Simpson cases (both criminal and civil), White Water, Heidi Fleiss, legendary music producer Phil Spector, alleged priest abuse cases, the

Hollywood Madame Heidi Fleiss, and Casey Anthony (the Tot Mom case), among many other criminal and civil matters. Paul continues to be affiliated with Decision Analysis, Inc. based in Los Angeles; and,

WHEREAS, it was during his work on the O.J. Simpson case that Paul was contacted and hired by NBC News to serve as their on-air jury expert appearing almost daily on the Today Show, Nightly News and other NBC, CNBC and MSNBC (a new network at the time) programs; and,

WHEREAS, during these years in academia, Paul believed it was important to give back to the profession and was appointed a Disciplinary Commissioner serving on the Illinois Attorney

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Registration and Disciplinary Commission, a body he served on for 25 years including serving many years as Chair of its Inquiry Panel; and,

WHEREAS, Paul was a member of the American Bar Association, Illinois and Chicago Bar Associations and joined the talented team of lawyers and judges who performed in the legendary Christmas Spirits Bar Show, being one of only a few performers who earned lead solos after only one year in the show (unheard of in the highly competitive group); and,

WHEREAS, within the trial consulting profession, Paul always believed it was important to better the profession. Therefore, he joined the board of the American Society of Trial Consultants. Paul eventually served two terms as its President, and was responsible for the association creating and adopting its first ever Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility, and the important set of organizational Bylaws; and,

WHEREAS, Paul believed it important to educate members of the profession and developed a variety of courses on Interpersonal Relations, Decision Making, Depositions, Negotiation, Effective Communication, Public Speaking and Jury/Trial Psychology which he has presented in nearly every state in the union, Canada, and for a multitude of Fortune 50 corporations. Paul has presented hundreds of such informational and training seminars and speeches nationwide from California to Florida, New York to Texas and Hawaii and Alaska. He is also a frequently invited moderator for panels of all types and in many locations; and,

WHEREAS, given Paul's expertise in the areas of trial practice and communication, Paul was retained by the US Department of Justice to train its large staff of attorneys in a variety of areas including negotiation and deposition skills. He was also appointed to as a founding faculty member of the Justice Leadership Institute where he developed the course in effective communication taught to hundreds of U.S. Attorneys nationwide, including Presidential appointed U.S. Attorneys, and even including instructing then serving Attorney General Eric Holder; and,

WHEREAS, Paul began preparing students for success on the bar exam in numerous states by lecturing students for BarBri Bar Review in the areas of Constitutional Law, Professional Responsibility and the Multi-state Practice portion of the bar; and,

WHEREAS, Paul helped create a law school preparation program for students considering or undertaking a legal education noting that success in law school is unlike any previous or alternative educational endeavor. His National Institute for Legal Education exists today as Law Preview and his methods and efforts have been copied by other organizations offering similar programs based on Paul's original efforts; and,

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WHEREAS, among his most important accomplishments, Paul was a primary developer in the creation and growth of what is known today as the National Student Leadership Conference. The effort began in 1989 and flourishes today with a multitude of study-based courses in a variety of areas including law, medicine, engineering, education, journalism, international diplomacy and many other fields but all with an emphasis on leadership and communication skills as well. These courses are offered throughout the country and several international destinations, reaching thousands of students each year. Students study on the campuses of major educational institutions including Northwestern, Georgetown, Duke, Berkeley and many others; and,

WHEREAS, today, there are many similar opportunities and programs for young high school students; but back in 1989, what began as the National Law Camp (now the NSLC) was unheard of, the first of its kind, and garnered international attention from major newspapers and media outlets from the New York Times to the Washington Post, NBC, ABC, CBS and many other networks, and even caught the attention of several late night television hosts including Jay Leno and David Letterman; and,

WHEREAS, the programs flourish today and while Paul is no longer actively involved in program planning, he has continued to appear at several sessions each summer in Chicago, Washington, D.C., New York City, and other locations; and,

WHEREAS, today, Paul Lisnek is a household name throughout the City of Chicago and beyond as a result of his work covering politics, law, and theater and the arts on television and radio. Paul has been called "the Dean of Illinois Politics," by Mayor Jerry Bennett (Palos Hills) as he served as the keynote speaker for the Southtown Conference of Mayors. Known today for his affiliation as Chicago's Very Own WGN-TV and WGN radio, Paul's career actually began many years earlier, and included both local and national affiliations; and,

WHEREAS, Paul began his TV career in 1986 when he was hired to host a new local television program called "Inside Your Government," for what was then Continental Cablevision. Paul's first TV effort was a live call-in TV show featuring a variety of political and social issue guests including U.S. Senator Paul Simon among others; and,

WHEREAS, when Continental Cable merged with and morphed into other cable entities including Media One and AT&T, Paul's work continued as host of a newsmagazine called "The Journal," and as the entertainment

reporter for a program called "Prime Time Chicago". In early 2002, Paul became an anchor for "Comcast Newsmakers," which features as guests, the leading political figures and social organization leaders in the Chicagoland area, Springfield, Rockford and other cities. The 5 minute interviews are part of Comcast's educational and informational efforts to serve the larger community. Paul anchors Newsmakers to this day, and also hosts several Special event broadcasts for Comcast; and,

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WHEREAS, beginning in 2010, Paul helped create and has from its inception, served as the host of "Broadway in Chicago Backstage," a 30 minute program that features the hottest Broadway shows playing on Chicago stages. From Billy Elliott to Wicked, Hamilton, Paradise Square and The Devil Wears Prada, the show is recorded at the Broadway Playhouse which allows for a live studio audience which is able to ask questions of the prominent guests who join Paul on stage. From Billy Porter and Harvey Fierstein, to Steven Schwartz and the cast of Dear Evan Hansen, this has been an amazing opportunity for students and community members alike, one not unlike the popular show: "Inside the Actors Studio." "Backstage" weathered the pandemic and has resumed production with safety protocols in place to permit continued promotion of major Chicago theatrical productions throughout the city; and,

WHEREAS, Paul's national television work began with NBC News as the network's jury expert during the O.J. Simpson criminal trial and then continued beyond that case as NBC producers respected Paul's work. It was not uncommon for Tom Brokaw to say, "Get me Lisnek tonight." Paul appeared almost daily on The Today Show, Nightly News, and a variety of other news programs on all NBC networks including Geraldo and even Maury Povich, where a jury was selected during the show; and,

WHEREAS, Paul became a frequent guest on Court TV appearing as a regular on Cochran and Company (hosted by Johnny Cochran) and Cochran and Grace, beginning in the early 1990s. Paul was subsequently offered an anchor role on the network, but before he made the move to NYC, the network was sold and all offers were pulled. Yet, Paul was told he was one of the best guests and hosts the network had ever seen. Johnny Cochran told the new owners: "If you take care of anyone, take care of Paul Lisnek!"; and,

WHEREAS, Paul also served as a frequent expert guest on a multitude of television and radio stations throughout the country and abroad discussing the current legal and political issues of the day. He continues to make guest appearances on national radio programs today; and,

WHEREAS, beginning in 2007, Paul was a regular guest featured on many WVON radio programs including regular spots on the popular Cliff Kelley Show. In 2008, Paul was hired to host his own radio program, "The Paul Lisnek Show," as the only Caucasian host on the otherwise all African-American station because he impressed owner Melody Spann Cooper so much that she decided to bring him on board. His show remained among the most popular shows through its run; and,

WHEREAS, Paul's primary role on WGN-TV began in 2008 following a guest appearance on the # 1 rated WGN Morning News to discuss his then new book, "The Hidden Jury." He was hired shortly thereafter as the political analyst for WGN-TV and CLTV appearing on all news programs discussing political and legal matters, a role he continues to hold to this day; and,

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WHEREAS, in 2010, the news director created a show for Paul seen nightly on CLTV called "Politics Tonight." First, promised that the show would be given a trial of 3 months, the show proved so popular that it remained on the air for 10 years at which time, the new owners of WGN-TV decided to shut down CLTV. At that time, while many other hosts and anchors lost their jobs, Paul was retained and provided with a new weekly political show called "WGN-TV Political Report," which continues to enjoy popularity and great ratings success to the current day. Paul also appears every Friday evening on the WGN-TV Evening News at 9pm to review the politics of the previous week; and,

WHEREAS, Paul's interviews have included Presidential candidates, Governors, Congressmen, State Senators and Representatives, City of Chicago Mayors and Aldermen. To be sure, there is hardly a politician in the state who does not know and admire the work of Paul Lisnek; and,

WHEREAS, Paul also serves as a fill-in host on WGN radio, having worked many time slots from 5am until 10pm, weekdays and weekends. Paul was told by executive Mary Boyle, that he remains a top fill-in choice; and,

WHEREAS, Paul also hosts the popular WGN Radio podcast called "Paul Lisnek Behind the Curtain," which features the hottest figures in theater, arts, entertainment and politics, including top authors; and,

WHEREAS, Paul relied on his on-air experience to help bring focus and interest to many public political debates he has moderated, including one for Mayor of the City of Chicago prior to the 2019 election, and one for Alderman of the 44<sup>th</sup> Ward in 2011, among others; he also moderates many political panels; and,

WHEREAS, Paul's work in Television has been recognized with more than 15 Emmy Awards, Beacon Awards, Telly (Silver and Bronze) Awards, Chicagoland Cable Awards, and Communicator and WIC Awards. In addition, several additional nominations for Emmy Awards were made reflecting the consistent excellence of Lisnek's work on television; and,

WHEREAS, the 96<sup>th</sup> Illinois General Assembly of the House of Representatives honored Paul's television work by passing a resolution commemorating his "efforts, dedication and hard work" (sponsored-by Representative Patricia Bellock); and,

WHEREAS, through the years, Paul has authored many academic/scholarly articles and 15 books. 13 of those books concern critical skills for success such as Negotiation, Communication and success in law school and the law; and,

WHEREAS, Paul's latest two books took him to adventure in the world of mystery fiction writing "Assume

Guilt," and "Assume Treason," both utilizing Chicago as its setting and home for the main characters; and,

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Alderman, 46th Ward

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WHEREAS, "Assume Treason" was awarded the Indie Award for Best Fiction Finalist in 2022. As one reviewer of Assume Guilt noted, reading Paul's book is like taking a bus down Michigan Avenue with all the familiar references to the city and its neighborhoods. His works of fiction have truly been a love note to his hometown city; and,

WHEREAS, pets and animals have always been close to Paul's heart. Every year, he donates significant dollars to a multitude of animal care and welfare organizations based in Chicago (including Animal Care and Control) and also nationwide. But specifically, his efforts here in Chicago have been significant. For PAWS Chicago, Paul donated funds for which he was recognized with the naming of the Adoption Center Reception area in his honor, and then the honor was transferred to a dog adoption room and the staff volunteer office, both of which are adorned with numerous portraits of Paul's beloved pets. In addition to annual giving, Paul has included critical animal shelters in his estate plans for future benefit and endowment; and,

WHEREAS, Paul has also provided significant assistance to Anti-Cruelty Society where Paul's funding led to the naming of the Dog Adoption room with several family portraits adorning the wall, the Outside Memorial and Tribute Wall, and an adoption room as well. Paul continues to dedicate time and money to the important work of ACS. For example, Paul has for many years donated his time to emcee annual galas and other events for shelters like Anti-Cruelty Society to assist in their fundraising efforts; and,

WHEREAS, the theatrical and related arts are very dear to Paul's heart. It is another of his passions which commands his time and financial support. His efforts are present in many Chicago-based theaters (including Goodman, Steppenwolf, Victory Gardens, Lookingglass, and Black Ensemble Theatre) with the naming of numerous seats in his honor and in honor of his family and especially his pets. Beyond the seat naming, The Black Ensemble Theatre was gifted funds for the naming of the Paul M Lisnek Bar and Concession Stand; The Auditorium Theatre of Chicago recognized Paul's funding by permanently naming two concession stand areas in the main lobby, and including him on plaques noting his assistance with elevator reconstruction as well as a prominent location as one of the top donors for the Auditorium Theatre Memory Wall; and,

WHEREAS, Paul has also been a consistent contributor to countless medium and small sized theaters to keep them functioning, and made several donations to efforts initiated during Covid to assist actors and other theater staff out of work; and,

WHEREAS, Paul has for many years donated his time to emcee annual galas and other events for many theaters to assist in their fundraising efforts. Also, in addition to annual giving, Paul has included numerous theaters in his estate plans for future benefit and endowment; and,

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WHEREAS, as one of the larger donors to the Museum, Paul's funding covered the purchase and installation of the air conditioning system for the museum and his efforts were recognized with the creation of the Paul M. Lisnek Gallery, a permanent exhibit honoring Paul's work in television and radio, which also showcases a number of authentic items from Paul's TV and Radio personal memorabilia collection; and,

WHEREAS, Paul has also consistently helped to fund many health care related organizations in the city, even when others began to decrease their support. In fact, one year, Paul received a letter of appreciation from Dr. Stan Sloan of Chicago House noting that donations had significantly decreased because many people believed the AIDS crisis had ended, but Sloan noted that Paul's important support continued throughout the years allowing Chicago House to pursue its mission; and,

WHEREAS, Paul wanted to support the permanent recognition of the essential efforts of the LGBTQ community, and he offered to be the sole sponsor of the Legacy Project's Permanent Tribute to the Legendary Josephine Baker which stands today on Halsted just north of Addison; and,

WHEREAS, Paul also has given support to Honor Flight Chicago by producing with Comcast, an Emmy Award winning special that followed 3 World War II vets for their special day in Washington. Paul was so moved by the experience, he took his own father for his day of honor prior to his death to see the U.S. Capitol, which he had never seen before; and,

WHEREAS, among Paul's other specials are one focused on the creation and opening of the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center. Also, an Emmy Award winning production, Paul continues to support the museum and whenever he sees Governor J.B. Pritzker, the governor always brings up their work together during that important Illinois museum opening; and,

WHEREAS, to recognize his thanks to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign for all his education from this institution, Paul has made several lasting gifts to the University and many of its entities including: The naming of the Coffee/Refreshment restaurant and two faculty conference rooms in the recently totally renovated Lincoln Hall (an effort which former Governor Pat Quinn noted personally in a conversation with Paul); and,

WHEREAS, Paul has also endowed a future Professorial Chair in Law and Communication to the Communication department with a dedicated fund of \$1M; and,

WHEREAS, the naming of the Million Volume Permanent Exhibit adorns a hallway in the University's Main Library for which a special reception was held in Paul's Honor and two



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Councilman Ryan and Councilman Hoffman will be the main speakers at the event;

UCF and COMB will be the main speakers at the event;

Peabody and TFA will be the main speakers at the event;

ZION, LAKEVIEW and SUNSHINE

plaques greet visitors who walk through the exhibit. In addition, Paul continues to fund various rare book and resource purchases desired by the library system; and,

WHEREAS, the creation of the Paul M. Lisnek Award for Trial Advocacy and Ethics at the University of Illinois College of Law is an endowed and permanent award given to several students each year through a competition. It has become an important designation for students, to receive and Paul drives down each year to personally greet the students and present the awards. Paul is also a member of the important John Cribbet Society for the Law School and has assisted with the building's capital campaign; and,

WHEREAS, Paul served as the financial sponsor of the Department of Communication's Trial Advocacy Team among other projects; and,

WHEREAS, for his dedication to the University of Illinois, Paul has been recognized through the years with numerous Alumni Awards from the College of Law, School of Communication and the university itself; and,

WHEREAS, in 2008, Paul was named an Honorary Kentucky Colonel by then Governor Steve Bashir of the Great Commonwealth of Kentucky, following a nomination by a local judge and subsequent vetting. This notable honor puts Paul in the company of other Honorary Colonels like Muhammad Ali, Arthur Ashe, Fred Astaire, Warren Buffet, George H.W. Bush, Jimmy Carter, Winston Churchill, Bill Clinton, Walt Disney, John Glenn, and Whoopi Goldberg, among other notables; and,

WHEREAS, in addition, Paul's caricature portrait hangs on the celebrity wall of Petterino's Restaurant downtown, proudly on the wall of Harry Caray's Restaurant on Kinzie, and in other restaurant and commercial locations in Chicago, Deerfield and even Geneva, IL; and,

WHEREAS, Paul M. Lisnek, J.D., Ph.D. has dedicated his career and life to the betterment of his Chicago community and the state of Illinois, with an impressive effort to educate, and providing guidance for countless young people and adult professionals throughout the country and around the world; and,

WHEREAS, through his almost omnipresence on television and radio, the large number of authored books, countless speeches, seminars, training, and by volunteering significant time and plentiful and meaningful donations through the years to fund a multitude of important organizations, institutions and entities, Paul's life has been and continues to be one dedicated to making a difference. A difference that makes life better for others, provides opportunities for others (both human and animal), and hopefully motivates others in the community to walk in his footsteps to do the same in their own life; now therefore

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**JAMES CAPPLEMAN Alderman, 46th Ward --.**

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THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Mayor, and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled this 21st Day of September 2022, do hereby call for honoring Paul Lisnek as an exemplary Chicagoan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to Paul Lisnek as a gift of gratitude from the City of Chicago honoring all the work he has done to advocate for others.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we declare June 19, 2023 to be Paul Lisnek Day in the City of Chicago.

Sincerely,

Alderman James Cappleman, 46<sup>th</sup> Ward

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