

**MEMORIAL RESOLUTION CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF  
BILBO "RED" JONES**

**WHEREAS**, On August 4, 2023, the last bell tolled on the life of Bilbo "Red" Jones as he gave up his worn earthly vessel exchange for a well-deserved and peaceful rest; and

**WHEREAS**, The Chicago City Council has been informed of Red's passing by the Honorable Emma Mitts, Alderman of the 37th Ward; and

**WHEREAS**, Born September 6, 1931, in Anding, MS, Red was the third of eleven children born to the late Adola and Lewis Jones, Sr.; and

**WHEREAS**, Having been born near the onset of The Great Depression, Red began his formal course of education in the Yazoo County School District at the Kelly School, until the impacts of the Great Depression required him to begin working to help sustain his family; and

**WHEREAS**, Red would continue to work until being drafted into the US Army during the Korean War, where he served two years as a small arms weapons instructor and obtained the rank of Corporal, before being honorably discharged and returning home to work as a laborer in the now defunct McGraw Sawmill, located in Bentonia, Mississippi; and

**WHEREAS**, Raised in a close and loving family, Red received spiritual nurturing and guidance from his parents leading him to accept Christ at an early age, beginning an intimate and life-long love of God; as his faith grew, he was baptized and became a member of Old Concord M.B. Church under the pastoral leadership of the late Rev. Saul Roberts; and

**WHEREAS**, One Sunday afternoon while awaiting a bus in Bentonia to return to his military post at Fort Benning, he met a young lady named Betty Jean Harrington, who possessed a strong work ethic, family values, and most importantly, was already approved by his father – although Red could be a little shy, his father noticed his son's interest and prodded Red to ask for her address, and thus began their courtship; and

**WHEREAS**, On January 2, 1955, Red and Betty were united in holy matrimony, and to their union, seven children were born: Hubert Lee, Judge (aka Fuzzy), Larry, Peggie, Patricia, Shirley, and Lora; and

**WHEREAS**, A simple and humble man, Red wore being a "country boy" as a badge of pride, enjoying small game hunting and fishing with his family and friends, and developing an affinity for the blues and the music of Howling Wolf, Muddy Waters, and Jimmy Reed; and

**WHEREAS**, Red was also resourceful, and, to the dismay of his wife and children, enjoyed tinkering with malfunctioning household items, beaming with pride when he restored the items to working order, particularly if it saved him from having to pay someone else to do it, regardless of how it looked, with wires, aluminum foil, and duct tape everywhere; and

**WHEREAS**, In September 1964, while in search of better work and a better life, Red and Betty relocated their family to the West Side of Chicago; knowing the benefits of trusting in the Lord and seeking and obeying the direction of the Holy Spirit, Red and Betty had also immediately sought a new church home, joining The Traveling Trinity M.B. Church under the pastoral leadership of the late Rev. Eugene Rance; and

**WHEREAS**, While a member of Traveling Trinity M.B. Church, Red became an ordained deacon, later serving as the Chairman of the Deacons Board and trustee; and

**WHEREAS**, Around 1971, after relocating to a different neighborhood, the family changed its church affiliation to Mandell United Methodist Church, where Red would remain until his return to Mississippi in 2009; and

**WHEREAS**, Over time, the name "Brother Jones" became synonymous with Mandell; during his 38-year tenure at Mandell, there wasn't a position in which he had not served, but most of his time was spent as the Superintendent of the Sunday School Board, Sunday school teacher, and Director of Church Maintenance; and

**WHEREAS**, Through his duties to the church, Red developed a passion and intensity for dissecting and teaching the word of God, and through his diligent study of God's word, Red's knowledge and wisdom grew and revealed exactly what was to become his personal ministry: nursing home bible study; every Sunday beginning in the mid-1970s until his relocation to Canton, Mississippi in 2009, Red held Bible study with the long-term care patients at Mayfield Manor Care & Rehab Center Nursing Home located at 5905 W. Washington Blvd; and

**WHEREAS**, Red's guidance and compassion led many of the residents to regard him as their pastor/minister of faith; from his annual one-man Christmas shows, complete with musical entertainment, to small gift bags packaged by his grandchildren, Red not only provided the seniors with spiritual guidance, but also love, kindness, and a sense of value and worth; and

**WHEREAS**, God bestowed special blessings on Red, enabling him to secure employment immediately upon arriving in Chicago, working for the W.D. Allen MFG Company assembling and packaging lawn sprinkler systems in suburban Broadview until the company went out of business in 1974; and

**WHEREAS**, Fortunately, a year earlier, Red and Betty had purchased a combined beauty salon and barbershop at 5118 W. Chicago Ave, and that purchase not only cushioned the blow from Red's loss of work but grew into a thriving business during a time when entrepreneurial opportunities for African-Americans were limited; and

**WHEREAS**, Keeping the barbershop staffed with reliable barbers proved challenging until, at Betty's suggestion, Red and Betty pivoted their business model to a record and variety shop, which they successfully maintained for 33 years before passing it to their eldest son, Hubert Lee; and

**WHEREAS**, Throughout his career, Red's resume boasted numerous jobs in manufacturing, building maintenance, and entrepreneurship, and Red ultimately retired from the Triton College Building Maintenance Division in River Grove; and

**WHEREAS**, During his time in Chicago, Red never shied away from civic duties, which ranged from serving as a precinct captain for local elections, serving two terms as the Chairman of the Gladys-Van Buren Townhouse Organization, participating in the local neighborhood watch, and coaching the Austin Area Wrist Ladies Softball team; and

**WHEREAS**, After retiring and returning to Mississippi in 2009, Red sought a place to continue his practice of Christian faith and joined the New Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church under the pastoral leadership of Rev. John Booth, where he found many new sisters and brothers in Christ that formed a devoted network of friends and loved ones in Christ; and


**WHEREAS**, In fact, on his arrival, Red immediately informed the pastor and staff that he was there to help as their representative in the community, ministering to a local nursing home, and Red was soon put to work at Nichols Center Nursing Home where he served the residents with bible study, and once again, Red found an eager and grateful audience of patient residents ready to participate in increasing their knowledge of the Lord; and

**WHEREAS**, Red leaves to cherish in his memory a loving and devoted wife and partner of 68 years, Betty Jean Jones; two sons, Hubert Lee (Elois) Harrington and Larry Miller; four daughters, Peggie A. Jones, Patricia A. Lee (Allen), Shirley A. Jones and Lora A. Jones; 29 grandchildren, 51 great-grandchildren, and 12 great-greatgrandchildren; one brother, Paul Jones (Annie Lee) of Flora, MS; four sisters; Mattie Yancy of Anding, MS, Oretha Jones of Flora, MS, Linda West (Robert) of Jackson, MS and Georgia Mae Johnson of Eastpointe, Michigan; a daughter-in-law, Janetta Jones (Fuzzy) of Baltimore, MD; two sisters-in-law Catherine Jones (Frank) of Detroit, MI, and Lena Jones (Bennie) of Jackson, MS, and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, and beloved special friends including sister-in-law Nancy Fouche (Eugene), niece Carolyn Roberts, Larie Hopewell, Tonya Richardson, Leroy Bethley, Clarence and Gloria Adams, Gerald Cannon, and many more; and

**WHEREAS**, Everywhere he went, Red left an indelible impression on those with whom he came into contact; described so often as being filled with kindness, generosity, wisdom, and knowledge – and never missing an opportunity to speak of his Christian faith – he is sure to be missed by many; now, therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED**, That we, the Mayor and members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, gathered here this thirteenth day of September, 2023, do hereby honor the life and legacy of Bilbo "Red" Jones; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Bilbo "Red" Jones as token of our esteem and respect.

  
EMMA MITTS  
Alderman, 37th Ward