

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, In recognition of his more than 60 years leading the fight for racial equality and an economy that works for all, the City of Chicago is honored to congratulate Reverend Jesse L. Jackson on his retirement as President of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition; and

WHEREAS, Jesse Louis Jackson was born in Greenville, South Carolina on October 8, 1941, a time where Jim Crow laws enforced segregation across the country; after graduating high school, he attended the University of Illinois – Urbana Champaign for two semesters before transferring due to the racism he faced; and

WHEREAS, While in college, Reverend Jackson became involved with the Civil Rights Movement after being denied access to a segregated branch of the Greenville library when he returned home from U of I for Christmas break; Reverend Jackson and seven other local students, now known as the Greenville Eight, staged a sit-in, ultimately leading to the integration of the Greenville library system; and

WHEREAS, After transferring to the North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, a Historically Black University, Reverend Jackson would go on to become the Aggie's quarterback and student body president; and

WHEREAS, The young Reverend Jackson would also participate in the Selma to Montgomery marches organized by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, eventually earning him the attention of Dr. King, who appointed him as the head of the Chicago branch of Operation Breadbasket, an organization that promoted the hiring of Black people by companies operating in Black communities; and

WHEREAS, After leaving Operation Breadbasket, Reverend Jackson formed People United to Save Humanity (Operation PUSH), which focused on social justice by working to promote Black economic empowerment and organizing boycotts of businesses unwilling to hire in Black communities; and

WHEREAS, In 1984, the Reverend resigned his post as President of Operation PUSH and created the Rainbow Coalition in preparation for his groundbreaking campaign for President of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Jackson's 1984 campaign broke barriers; over the course of the campaign, Reverend Jackson earned over 3.2 million votes, winning four states and the District of Columbia, finished third overall, and became the first Black person to win a major-party state primary; and

WHEREAS, His 1988 campaign for the Democratic nomination also shocked political observers by bringing together a multi-racial coalition behind progressive social and economic policies; on his way to earning 6.9 million votes, winning 10 states and the District of Columbia, and finishing second overall, Reverend Jackson was considered the frontrunner for the nomination after a surprise victory in Michigan; and

WHEREAS, After the 1988 campaign, Reverend Jackson would go on to lead a new organization that combined Operation PUSH and Rainbow Coalition – the renamed organization, the Rainbow PUSH Coalition, would focus on issues Reverend Jackson had been advocating for decades: Black economic empowerment, voting rights, and racial equality; and

WHEREAS, In July 2023, Reverend Jackson announced his plans to step down as the President of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition after more than 60 years as a leader in the Civil Rights Movement; and

WHEREAS, Following his announcement, the Reverend was rightly honored by Vice President Kamala Harris, the first Black woman to hold the position, who called him “one of America’s greatest patriots, someone who deeply believes in the promise of our country, a fighter for freedom and human rights for all people”; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and the members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled this fourteenth day of September 2023, do hereby congratulate Reverend Jesse L. Jackson on his tenure as President of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition and his groundbreaking political achievements; express our deepest gratitude for his exemplary service to our City and country; and extend our best wishes for his continued health, happiness, prosperity, and success; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to Reverend Jesse L. Jackson as a sign of our deep appreciation and esteem for dedicating his life to the Civil Rights Movement, the betterment of the Black community, and his vision for bold social and economic policies that helped form the core of modern progressive political and social movements.