

ORDINANCE

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO:

SECTION 1. Pursuant to Section 2-8-040 of the Municipal Code of Chicago, which allows erection of honorary street name designations, the Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Transportation shall take the necessary action for standardization of S. Ashland St. between 57th St. and 58th St. as Honorary “Mother Lula Mae Watson-Williams Way”.

SECTION 2. This ordinance shall take effect upon its passage and publication.

STEPHANIE D. COLEMAN
Alderman, 16th Ward

Mother Lula Mae Watson-Williams and Williams Inn

Mother Williams established her Chicago employment pathway as a domestic worker before venturing into the hospitality industry by way of various pizza parlors throughout the City of Chicago. As one of the first African American workers at nationally renowned Pizzeria Due, she expanded her knowledge, pursuit of growth and greater responsibility, at mainstream pizzeria like Gino's and Lou Malnati's. Through these endeavors she envisioned a pizzeria that her family and friends could enjoy, so she invested her earnings and began her entrepreneurship journey, establishing Williams Inn located in the 16th Ward at 5701 S. Ashland Ave in 1969.

Through her fierce determination and perseverance, Mother Williams gained a solid reputation as an astute businesswoman with strong business acumen. Remembering the opportunities given to her upon her arrival to Chicago, she quickly established herself as a fair employer who would hire residents within the community who were considered "undesirable" employees because of their criminal background and/or lack of experience. Mother Williams understood the value of giving opportunities to those who are interested in upward mobility and moving to a higher level of life. She became a change agent in positively transforming the lives of many, thereby becoming a stabilizing force in the 16th Ward.

Williams Inn historically opened as a bar that served the best pizza! Later, it evolved into a full restaurant with a seating capacity of 120. Soon thereafter, a pool hall was constructed next door and offered a neighborhood venue where residents of all ages could socialize together in a friendly and safe space.

Tragically, the 5701 S. Ashland location succumbed to a fire, resulting in a move to another location on 87th Street near Winchester. In 2021, the Williams Inn relocated to 2210 S. Michigan where it remains family owned and operated with a full-service pizza restaurant and sports.

For over five decades Williams Inn has satisfied the appetite of family across the Chicagoland area, specifically here in the 16th Ward. Mrs. William's dream of an affluent upscale restaurant has provided generations with wealth and a full experience that feeds the hearts, minds, and stomachs of Chicagoans and beyond.