

1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The Honorable Eugene Sawyer is a native of
3 Alabama; the eldest of 6 children, he traveled to Chicago
4 every summer while attending Alabama State University in
5 Montgomery; he lived with his aunt on the South Side and held
6 summer jobs making touch-up paint for cars at Dupli-Color
7 Products Company, and assembling automatic sprinklers at
8 Rockwood Sprinkler Company; and

9 WHEREAS, After graduating from college in 1956 with a
10 degree in secondary education, Eugene Sawyer taught
11 mathematics and chemistry for a year at a high school in
12 Prentiss, Mississippi, but in 1957 he moved to Chicago
13 permanently; and

14 WHEREAS, Unable to locate a job in a laboratory, Eugene
15 Sawyer ended up working for Rockwood Sprinklers for 2 years;
16 in 1959, his cousin helped him land a position as a laborer
17 on the city's South Side water-filtration plant; and

18 WHEREAS, City jobs were just not handed out to anyone in
19 those days, most city employees were expected to join a
20 Democratic ward organization, and to kick in 1 to 2 percent
21 of their paychecks as dues; Eugene Sawyer dutifully joined
22 the 6th Ward organization and began methodically working his
23 way up; and

24 WHEREAS, As Eugene Sawyer rose through the ranks of the
25 ward organization, he rose through the patronage ranks of the
26 city water department as well; he became president of the 6th
27 Ward Young Democrats, financial secretary of the entire ward
28 organization, and finally its president, a position that was
29 second in command to his political mentor, Robert Miller, the
30 6th Ward alderman and democratic committeeman; and

31 WHEREAS, Eugene Sawyer served as alderman of the 6th Ward

1 from 1972 to 1987; during his stint as alderman, Mr. Sawyer
2 served as mayor pro tem under Harold Washington from 1985 to
3 1987; and

4 WHEREAS, After the sudden and unexpected death of the
5 late Mayor Harold Washington, and after a long turbulent
6 night at City Hall, Eugene Sawyer was sworn in as Mayor of
7 Chicago at 4:01am on December 2, 1987 by City Clerk Walter
8 Kozubowski; and

9 WHEREAS, Eugene Sawyer's quiet and effective leadership
10 expanded Chicago's governmental outreach of cooperative
11 partnerships in business and industry; his many
12 accomplishments include:

13 (1) Convening a broad range of youth service providers
14 whose expertise was needed to study and review the problems
15 and issues which affect youth and present recommendations to
16 government;

17 (2) Generating resources to honor and award youth who
18 excel in school through such programs as "The Mayor's Super
19 Scholars", an annual program which honors all Chicago Public
20 Schools Class Valedictorians, and "The Annual Science Fair";

21 (3) Recruiting and funding of community-based
22 organizations and churches that were interested in providing
23 wholesome educational, recreational, and cultural programs
24 and services as positive alternatives to gangs, crimes, and
25 violence;

26 (4) Fighting vigorously for a school reform package to
27 transform the Chicago Public School System and laying the
28 foundation for the successful tenure of School Superintendent
29 Paul Vallas; and

30 (5) Providing national leadership, via the Conference of
31 Mayors, to transform public policy's emphasis on problem

1 youth to an emphasis on productive youth and moving families
2 in poverty from dependency to self-sufficiency; and

3 WHEREAS, Eugene Sawyer's accomplishments and wisdom over
4 the years have greatly benefitted the citizens of Chicago;
5 therefore, be it

6 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
7 NINETY-SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
8 we commend Eugene Sawyer for his years of dedicated service
9 and support to the citizens of Chicago and that we extend to
10 him a special congratulations on the celebration of his 67th
11 birthday; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
13 presented to Eugene Sawyer as an expression of our esteem.