



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

100 East Erie Street
Chicago, IL 60611

Legislation Text

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MEMORIAL RESOLUTION FOR BOARD MEETING OF NOVEMBER 19, 2015

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION sponsored by the Board of Commissioners extending sympathy and condolences to the family of Augustus ("Gus") Alexander Savage

WHEREAS, Augustus Alexander Savage, commonly known as "Gus", was born in Detroit, Michigan on October 30, 1925 to the late Thomas Frederick and Molly Wilder Savage; and

WHEREAS, he grew up along with his four siblings in abject poverty in the south-side neighborhoods of Chicago where the lure of gangs, violence, and gambling were prevalent; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from Wendell Phillips High School in 1943, he served in the United States Army Air Corps from 1943 to 1946; and

WHEREAS, during his training as a navigator for the Tuskegee Airmen, he experienced first-hand virulent anti-black racism, which led him away from his past gang activity and towards renewed Christian faith, activity in the Civil Rights Movement, and a burgeoning intellectual curiosity.

WHEREAS, on August 4, 1946, Augustus Savage married Eunice King, his partner who walked with him for over thirty years in the Civil Rights Movement and in life; and

WHEREAS, Augustus received a B.A. from Roosevelt College in 1951. Three of his classmates were Dempsey Travis, Bennett Johnson, and Former Mayor Harold Washington. He did graduate work at Roosevelt College in 1952 and attended Chicago-Kent College of Law 1952-53; and

WHEREAS, Gus Savage then began a life-long vocation as a journalist from 1954-1979, founding the *Westside Booster* and *Lawndale Booster* newspapers. He later published *The American Negro*, a protest magazine that was among the first to print a photograph of the mutilated body of Emmett Till, a Chicago teenager lynched in Mississippi in 1955 for allegedly whistling at a white woman; and

WHEREAS, Gus Savage was one of Chicago's most influential Black journalists, the founder, owner, editor, and publisher of the *Citizens Community Newspapers*. This chain of Chicago area weeklies railed against the City's repressive and discriminatory practices against minorities, making Gus a forceful voice for equality and Black liberation; and

WHEREAS, his experience as a community organizer allowed for his natural transition to founder and chief strategist of the Black Political Independent Movement and Chairman of both the South-End Voters Conference and the Protest at the Polls; and

WHEREAS, in 1980, Gus stunned the political establishment when he was successfully elected to the 2nd Congressional District, Illinois, joining the Honorable Harold Washington and the Honorable Cardiss Collins thus marking the first time three African-American lawmakers represented Illinois in the United States House of Representatives; and

WHEREAS, Congressman Savage served the 2nd District (Illinois) in the 97th (1981-1983), 98th (1983-1985), 99th (1985-1987), 100th (1987-1989), 101st (1989-1991) and 102nd (1991-1993) Congresses; and

WHEREAS, Congressman Savage, “was the architect behind the election of a black mayor,” and supported the political rise of Congressman Harold Washington, a long-time friend, who became Chicago’s first Black mayor in 1983; and

WHEREAS, during his twelve years in the House of Representatives, Congressman Savage continued to be a strong voice for equality and minority involvement, serving as Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Economic Development, the House Subcommittee on Public Buildings and Grounds, and the House Committee on Small Business and Public Works and Transportation. Here he was able to bring \$153 million in federal aid to the Chicago area in addition to serving as Chairman of the Minority Business Brain Trust of the Congressional Black Caucus.

WHEREAS, Congressman Savage met with many world leaders including President Mobuto Sese Seco (Zaire), President Fidel Castro (Cuba), President Daniel Ortega (Nicaragua), Vice President Shimon Peres (Israel), President Hosni Mubarak (Egypt), President Robert Mugabe (Zimbabwe), King Hussein bin Talal (Jordan), and national leader Nelson Mandela (South Africa). He was the only freshman Congressman invited to speak at the 35th Annual Meeting of the World Peace Council in Copenhagen, Denmark; and

WHEREAS, in one of his final acts as Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Public Buildings and Grounds, the excavation and construction at the site of the African Burial Ground in New York City was temporarily halted in 1992, pending further evaluation by the General Services Administration; and

WHEREAS, following his retirement, Congressman Savage travelled, wrote (still unpublished) memoirs, spent time with family, and fully enjoyed life in great health for more than two decades; and

WHEREAS, Gus suffered a short illness and died on October 31, 2015, one day after celebrating his 90th birthday with family and close friends in the home of his son, Thomas, in Olympia Fields, Illinois. He is now joined with his parents, his siblings, and his beloved wife, who preceded him in death; and

WHEREAS, the Honorable Gus Savage passed on with cherished memories of his children: Thomas J. Savage, Sr. (Retired Judge Drella C. Savage) and Dr. Emma Savage-Davis; three grandchildren, Rev. Thomas J. Savage, Jr., Chyealla (Christopher) McBride, and Alexandria Savage; seven nephews, William, Erwin, Randolph, Phillip, Edmond, Kenneth and David Savage; three nieces, Enaid Savage, Diane Hazley, and Vivian Savage; a host of cousins, great nieces and nephews, and other relatives; close family friends, Louanner Peters and Bret Jones; and a group of faithful constituents of the 2nd Congressional District.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Board of Commissioners of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, on behalf of ourselves and staff, extend our sympathy and condolences to the family of Augustus Alexander Savage; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Resolution be spread upon the permanent Record of Proceedings of the Board of Commissioner of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago and that a copy of same, suitably engrossed, be presented to the family of Augustus Alexander Savage.

Dated: November 19, 2015

Approved: MARIYANA T. SPYROPOULOS, President; BARBARA J. MCGOWAN, Vice President; FRANK

AVILA, Chairman, Committee on Finance; MICHAEL A. ALVAREZ; TIMOTHY BRADFORD; CYNTHIA M. SANTOS; DEBRA SHORE; KARI K. STEELE; DAVID J. WALSH; Commissioners of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Approved as to Form and Legality: Ronald M. Hill, General Counsel