



City of Chicago



R2019-607

Office of the City Clerk

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Meeting Date: 7/24/2019

Sponsor(s): Lightfoot (Mayor)
Dowell (3)
King (4)
Ervin (28)

Type: Resolution

Title: Commemoration of 100th anniversary of Red Summer 1919

Committee(s) Assignment:

5058



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

LORI E. LIGHTFOOT
MAYOR

July 24, 2019

TO THE HONORABLE, THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I transmit herewith, together with Aldermen Dowell, King and Ervin, a resolution commemorating the Red Summer of 1919.

Your favorable consideration of this resolution will be appreciated.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lori E. Lightfoot".

Mayor



A resolution

adopted by The City Council
of the City of Chicago, Illinois



Presented by Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, Aldermen Sophia King, Pat Dowell and Jason Ervin on July 24, 2019

Whereas, 2019 marks the 100th anniversary of Red Summer, a shameful event that saw the murder and injury of hundreds of people in race riots across the United States, some of the worst of which occurred in the City of Chicago; and

WHEREAS, Competition for jobs and housing at the end of World War I led to a host of social and economic problems that fed into already simmering racial tensions; and

WHEREAS, In Chicago, those tensions boiled over with the murder of an African-American youth who, while seeking relief in Lake Michigan during a heat wave, drifted into a beach area near 29th Street that was informally segregated for whites only; and

WHEREAS, That youth, Eugene Williams, was floating on a raft with others when he was struck in the head by a stone thrown by a white man standing on a breakwater. Williams lost his grip on the raft, and drowned. A white police officer refused to arrest the white man who threw the stone, and instead arrested an African-American man. When African-Americans objected to this injustice, they were attacked by white beachgoers; and

WHEREAS, This incident's violence quickly spread beyond the beach, and throughout the City acts of violence took place, included rioting, vandalism, and arson, with the rioters even taking measures to slow or block the arrival of the fire department and other emergency responders; and

WHEREAS, Rioting took place as far north as the Loop, but mostly occurred in predominantly African-American neighborhoods, in which hundreds of homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed; and

WHEREAS, The violence continued nearly unchecked, and it was not until the Illinois National Guard became involved that it was brought under control; and

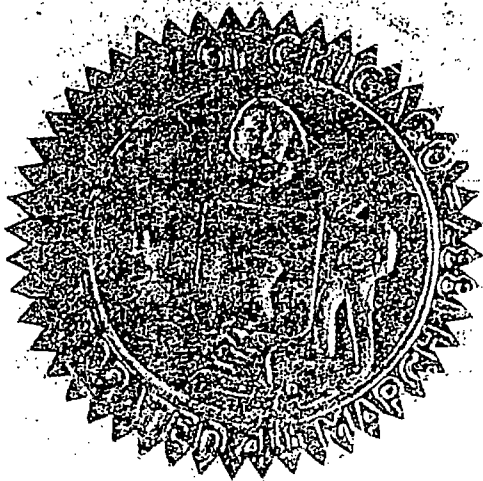
WHEREAS, Between July 27th and August 3rd, there were 38 deaths directly attributable to the rioting, and another 537 people were injured. The majority of the casualties were African-Americans, including one African-American policeman; and

WHEREAS, More than 1,000 residents were left homeless as a result of arson and other vandalism, the majority of whom were African-American. Businesses were destroyed, and other businesses locked African-American employees out because they feared a resurgence of violence. Rather than remain and rebuild, many African-Americans fled the City, never to return; and

WHEREAS, Red Summer is a time in our history that, while painful, represents an opportunity to learn and grow as a City; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled this twenty-fourth day of July, 2019, do hereby commemorate the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Red Summer; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we call upon all Chicagoans to continue to work to put aside the racial, ethnic, and economic divisions that gave rise to Red Summer, and come together as one City that promotes the well-being of all.



Eric E. Johnson
MAYOR

Andria H. Valencia
CITY CLERK

A resolution

adopted by *The City Council*
of the *City of Chicago, Illinois*



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Eric E. Light
MAYOR

Andrea M. Valencia
CITY CLERK