



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 17-0343, **Version:** 1

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### **PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

#### **IN MEMORY OF DR. GEORGE B. RABB, Ph.D., FORMER PRESIDENT AND PRESIDENT EMERITUS OF THE CHICAGO ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

**WHEREAS**, over the course of his more than 50-year career, Dr. George B. Rabb gained prominence globally as a conservation leader and a highly respected spokesman for wildlife conservation issues; and

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Rabb earned an undergraduate degree in biology from the College of Charleston in his home city of Charleston, South Carolina, and both a master's and doctoral degree in zoology from the University of Michigan; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1953, Dr. Rabb married Mary Sughrue Rabb, a fellow College of Charleston graduate who worked with Dr. Rabb on conservation issues until her passing in 2006; and

**WHEREAS**, a herpetologist by training, Dr. Rabb joined Brookfield Zoo in 1956 as one of the first Ph.D.'s to work in an American Zoo; he passionately served as the President of the Chicago Zoological Society from 1976 until 2004, at which time he was appointed President Emeritus; and

**WHEREAS**, during Dr. Rabb's tenure, the Chicago Zoological Society developed innovative approaches to the science of animal care and welfare, education and conservation, prompting the zoology field's first zoo nutrition lab for animals, first behavioral endocrinology testing for animal stress levels, and the first family play zoo, among many other notable firsts; and

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Rabb was instrumental in driving the concept of naturalistic and immersive animal exhibits and during his career, Brookfield Zoo enjoyed unprecedented revitalization and growth of its exhibits and programs; and

**WHEREAS**, throughout his career, Dr. Rabb published widely on many topics, including the evolutionary relationships of viperid snakes, behavioral development in okapi, social behavior in captive wolf packs, and the breeding behavior of pipid frogs; and

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Rabb served as the chair of the Species Survival Commission of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) from 1989 to 1996, the leading scientific group charged with monitoring biodiversity conservation and advising world governmental agencies and conservation organizations; and

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Rabb was extremely active in the local conservation community as well, serving as an active board member with the Center for Humans and Nature, Chicago Wilderness, and the Illinois State Museum; and

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Rabb continued to be at the forefront of the amphibian conservation movement throughout his career, founding the Declining Amphibian Populations Task Force within IUCN to determine the causes of sudden declines and extinctions around the world, and maintaining involvement through the Amphibian Survival Alliance and the Amphibian Ark; and

**WHEREAS**, in recognition of their lifetime commitment to amphibians and work as conservationists and herpetologists, a new species of frog discovered in 2005 - colloquially known as "Rabbs' fringe-limbed treefrog" - was named in honor of George and Mary Rabb; and

**WHEREAS**, widely respected in his field, Dr. Rabb received many prestigious awards, including the 1996 Heini Hediger Award, 1997 Silver Medal of the Zoological Society of London and the 2008 Lifetime Achievement Award of the National Conference on Science, Policy and the Environment - the Chicago Zoological Society's George B. Rabb Conservation Medal is named in his honor; and

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Rabb inspired thousands of individuals to pursue conservation careers and advocacy, and he touched the hearts and lives of so many who worked with him; and

**WHEREAS**, on July 27, 2017, Dr. George B. Rabb passed away at the age of 87, surrounded by friends and loved ones; and

**WHEREAS**, as one of the world's leading conservationists, Dr. Rabb will be best remembered for his caring ethic, his deep concern and advocacy for animals, people and the environment, and his unwavering energy and commitment to make a difference for the natural world.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the President and the Forest Preserves of Cook County Board of Commissioners, on behalf of the residents of Cook County do extend their deepest condolences and most heartfelt sympathy to the family and friends of Dr. George B. Rabb; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that as a means of communicating our deep respect and admiration for Dr. Rabb's achievements at the Chicago Zoological Society and significant impact on the conservation of wildlife around the globe, suitable copies of this Resolution will be tendered to; Mildred Thrush, as Dr. Rabb's sister, Stuart D. Strahl, Ph.D., as Dr. Rabb's successor, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Zoological Society; Brooke Hecht, Ph.D., as Dr. Rabb's friend and President of the Center for Humans and Nature, and Kevin Ogorzalek, as Dr. Rabb's mentee and Chair of the Board of Brushwood Center.