



Legislation Text

File #: 21-0380, **Version:** 2

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF SECRETARY MATTHEW BENIGNO DELEON

WHEREAS, Matthew Benigno DeLeon will be retiring as Secretary to the Forest Preserves of Cook County Board of Commissioners on July 31, 2021; and

WHEREAS, Secretary DeLeon served in local government for over 30 years, nearly three years with the City of Chicago and 28 years with Cook County, of which ten (10) of those later years were shared with service to the Forest Preserves; and

WHEREAS, Secretary DeLeon's family history reflects much of the Asian American contribution and perseverance of the 20th century. His parents were each part of two different waves of Filipino immigration that were essential to the Asian American experience. His father, Pedro DeLeon, landed in Port Angeles, Washington in 1928, finding work in canneries as a bus boy and on the American railroads which brought him to Chicago. He would go on to serve in the U.S. Army's all-Filipino Regiment which participated in the retaking of the Philippines during World War II. After returning to Chicago, he worked at the Old Post Office downtown until his retirement in 1975. Secretary DeLeon's mother, Rosal DeLeon, arrived in Jersey City, New Jersey and made her way to Chicago as part of a wave of Filipino nurses that came to this country from the 1950s to the 1970s. She moved from hospital nursing at Illinois Masonic, Thorek and others to become Director of Nursing at a succession of nursing homes on the north side and in Evanston, retiring in 1999; and

WHEREAS, Secretary DeLeon attended Dawes School, Martin Luther King Jr. Laboratory School and Evanston Township High School, graduating in 1987. Interested in government from a young age, he participated in the YMCA Youth & Government program becoming the Youth Mayor of Evanston in 1985 and Youth Governor of Illinois two years later, and was a United States Congressional Page the summer before his junior year of high school, sponsored by Congressman Sidney R. Yates; and

WHEREAS, Secretary DeLeon later attended and graduated from American University in Washington, DC in 1991 and DePaul University College of Law in 2009. Summers during college saw additional opportunities in government for him as an intern for Illinois State Representative Woods Bowman, an intern in the Illinois House of Representatives, and as an intern for the City of Chicago Commission on Asian American Affairs; and

WHEREAS, in 1991 to 1993, Secretary DeLeon's first full-time job was in Mayor Richard M. Daley's Office in the Mayor's Correspondence Unit. In 1993, as an Assistant to the Chief Administrative Officer, Matt became familiar with the County's Economic and Community Development efforts, Employment and Training Programs and the changes to the unincorporated areas through Zoning Board and Building departments. In 2006, he was appointed to the position of Secretary to the Board of Commissioners of Cook County. With the advent of the Health and Hospitals System Board in 2008, Matt became the first Secretary of that Board; and

WHEREAS, in 2010, Matt began service under his fifth County Board President, Toni Preckwinkle and in 2011, President Preckwinkle designated Matt to serve as Secretary to the Forest Preserves Board of Commissioners, becoming the first person to serve in both roles simultaneously for the two governments.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Forest Preserves of Cook County Board of Commissioners, on behalf of all the residents of Cook County and users of the Forest Preserves, do hereby congratulate Matthew Benigno

DeLeon on a long, rich, and trailblazing career of public service. We thank Mr. DeLeon for his contributions to the Forest Preserves and express gratitude to Jubie and Gillian, his wife and daughter; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a suitable copy of this resolution be tendered to Mr. DeLeon in recognition of said contributions and dedication to a life of exemplary public service.