



Legislation Text

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

HONORING DR. TOM MEEHAN ON HIS RETIREMENT AS VICE PRESIDENT OF VETERINARY SERVICES AT THE CHICAGO ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY

WHEREAS, the Forest Preserves of Cook County Board of Commissioners is pleased to congratulate Dr. Tom Meehan on his retirement as Vice President of Veterinary Services at the Chicago Zoological Society after 30 years; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Meehan has had a monumental impact on the field of Zoological Medicine over the last five decades, and his countless noteworthy contributions have immensely benefited veterinary medicine, animal welfare and conservation efforts locally and globally; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Meehan started his work at Brookfield Zoo in July of 1993 as the Director of Veterinary Services, after having served as a veterinarian at Lincoln Park Zoo; and

WHEREAS, throughout his career, Dr. Meehan has been a voice for free ranging wildlife, tirelessly working to maintain the ability of veterinarians to legally provide the best care possible for wildlife, even when it doesn't fit the traditional domestic animal models of veterinary practice; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Meehan built strong partnerships with regional conservation organizations, including the Forest Preserves of Cook County, working alongside Forest Preserves wildlife biologists to better understand the health of the local environment. These partnerships led to the development of the Illinois Zoological and Wildlife Health Management Residency Program, a first-of-its-kind collaboration between the University of Illinois, Forest Preserves of Cook County, and Brookfield Zoo committed to population health and conservation; and

WHEREAS, before specialized pathology services were available to most zoological institutions, Dr. Meehan worked with pathologists at local and state academic institutions to develop what is now known as the University of Illinois Zoological Pathology Program, one of the first shared zoo and wildlife pathology programs of its kind which has grown to be one of the most productive and well-recognized teams of pathologists serving the zoo, wildlife and aquatic animal communities today; and

WHEREAS, in his commitment to advancing the care of zoological animals, Dr. Meehan was a major force behind the American Association of Zoo Veterinarians' efforts to establish guidelines for Zoo and Aquarium Veterinary Medical Programs and Veterinary Hospitals, which were later adopted in full by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums ("AZA"). Serving for 23 years on the AZA independent Accreditation Commission and as an advisor, Dr. Meehan had a positive and significant direct impact on the health and welfare of animals across the United States; and

WHEREAS, his passion for mentorship and education at all levels led Dr. Meehan to help develop exhibits and programs at Brookfield Zoo supporting early childhood education and contributing to the development of the area of study now known as conservation psychology, which began at Brookfield Zoo. He was instrumental in organizing the needed collaborative support that allowed for the development of one of the most sought-after professional training programs, the Illinois Zoological and Aquatic Animal Residency Program; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Meehan has worked tirelessly over his career to improve the care and well-being of primates, particularly gorillas, by advancing conservation efforts, standards of medical management, husbandry and breeding for

this species. In addition to working directly with the species, Dr. Meehan has published extensively on primates and gorillas, serving as both the Gorilla Species Survival Plan vet advisor and the Great Ape Taxon Advisory Group advisor, and has been an integral part of the Great Ape Heart Project; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Meehan has held professional roles with the United States Animal Health Association, American Veterinary Medical Association, the American Association of Zoo Veterinarians, and the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. He is also the recipient of many honors and awards, including the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Association of Zoo Veterinarians and the Association of Zoos and Aquariums' Inspector of the Year, among others; and

WHEREAS, through it all, Dr. Meehan has been a remarkable veterinarian, steadfast professional, trusted colleague, dedicated mentor, compassionate leader, and constant teacher.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Toni Preckwinkle, President, and the Forest Preserves of Cook County Board of Commissioners do hereby congratulate Dr. Tom Meehan for his dedication, service, and enormous contributions as Vice President of Veterinary Services at the Chicago Zoological Society and wish him well in all of his future endeavors; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a suitable copy of this Resolution be presented to Dr. Tom Meehan as a token of appreciation for his strong partnership with the Forest Preserves of Cook County.