

A resolution

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



Presented by Alderman Edward M. Burke on November 19, 2008

Whereas, The City of Chicago will observe with great sadness the *Fiftieth Anniversary* of the Our Lady of the Angels School Fire on December 1, 2008; and

WHEREAS, The tragedy claimed the lives of ninety-two children and three nuns and is recognized as Chicago's third-deadliest fire after the Iroquois Theater Fire and the Great Chicago Fire of 1871; and

WHEREAS, The fire began on the afternoon of December 1, 1958, in a cardboard trash barrel at the foot of the northeast stairwell in the basement of the school located at 909 North Avers Avenue in the Humboldt Park community; and

WHEREAS, The blaze, accompanied by thick black smoke, billowed up an open stairway before fanning out into the second floor where it trapped most victims in their classrooms and forced others to jump from second-story windows; and

WHEREAS, The tragedy's aftermath led to a nationwide overhaul of fire safety codes for schools, including automatic sprinkler systems, noncombustible construction, and fire alarms linked directly to the fire department; and

WHEREAS, While no official cause was determined, it has long been suspected that the fire was set by a young boy from the neighborhood with a history of arson who reportedly confessed to the crime before recanting his admission of guilt; and

WHEREAS, A memorial Mass will be offered at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, November 30, 2008, at Holy Family Church, 1080 West Roosevelt Road, and will be attended by both survivors and the families of victims of the tragedy; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and the members of the Chicago City Council, assembled this nineteenth day of November, 2008, do hereby pause the proceedings to take a moment of silence to pay our respects to the victims of the Our Lady of the Angels School Fire; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and the members of the Chicago City Council, call upon all Chicago schools, public and private, to observe a moment of silence on December 1, 2008, in solemn recognition of the *Fiftieth Anniversary* of the Our Lady of the Angels School fire; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That all of Chicago's public buildings, including police and fire stations, be directed to lower their flags to half staff in observance of the anniversary of this tragic event; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to Mr. Thomas Raymond, Chairman of the Fiftieth Anniversary Memorial Committee for the Our Lady of the Angels School Fire.



Richard M. Daley

Mayor

Miguel del Valle

City Clerk