



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 7, 2022

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT JOINS MAYOR HAROLD WASHINGTON LEGACY
COMMITTEE TO ANNOUNCE HAROLD WASHINGTON CENTENNIAL
CELEBRATION**

*Reception, musical entertainment, speakers, and award presentations on April 12th
will honor the contributions of Mayor Washington to the City of Chicago*

Today, Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot announced an event to celebrate Chicago Mayor Harold Washington on what would be his 100th birthday. This centennial celebration, titled "*HERE'S HAROLD! A Centennial Birthday Celebration Honoring the Life, Spirit, and Remarkable Achievements of Mayor Harold Washington,*" will honor the contributions of Harold Washington to the City of Chicago.

The event, which will take place on April 12th at 5:30 PM at the Harold Washington Library Center (400 S. State St.), is hosted in partnership with the Mayor Harold Washington Legacy Committee (MHWLC) and the Chicago Public Library. The event includes a reception, musical entertainment, speakers, and award presentations. Honorary co-chairs of the event include Governor JB Pritzker, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, and Rainbow PUSH founder Rev. Jesse Jackson.

"Mayor Washington boldly challenged the status quo and courageously demanded equity and justice for communities that had been underserved for generations," said Mayor Lightfoot. "It is a true honor to be able to continue this work and walk in his footsteps today. I thank the MHWLC for co-hosting this centennial celebration of his life, as well as their work to keep his legacy alive."

In addition to the birthday celebration, MHWLC is proclaiming 2022 as the Year of Harold Washington. The Chicago City Council Black Caucus has also proclaimed April 15th as *Harold Washington Day*.

"The Chicago Public Library is thrilled to partner with Mayor Lightfoot to celebrate Mayor Harold Washington," said Chicago Public Library Commissioner Chris Brown. "The event will take place at the Harold Washington Library Center, the City's central library, which represents Mayor Washington's tenacity, his belief in the



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



power of community and democracy, and the importance of celebrating Chicago's history."

"The mission of the Mayor Harold Washington Legacy Committee (MHWLC) is to preserve and promote the legacy of Mayor Harold Washington," said Josie Childs, President & Founder of Mayor Harold Washington Legacy Committee. "I can think of no better way to fulfill that mission and preserve his legacy, than by having a grand celebration of his 100th birthday. On behalf of the MHWLC, I'd like to thank Mayor Lori Lightfoot, First Lady Amy Eshleman, and the Chicago Public Library for partnering with the Mayor Harold Washington Legacy Committee to host this momentous event."

In 1983, after a multi-racial coalition of progressives supported his candidacy, Harold Washington was elected the 51st mayor of Chicago and made history as the first African American to hold the position. Washington attended DuSable High School, Roosevelt University, Northwestern University, and Northwestern Pritzker School of Law. He served in the military with honors during World War II. He later become was a precinct captain, assistant city prosecutor, state representative, state senator, and member of Congress. News of Mayor Washington's death on Nov. 25, 1987, shocked not only the city but the entire country. He was seven months into his second term when he succumbed to a heart attack in his City Hall office at the age of 65.

While Mayor of Chicago, Washington created the Ethics Committee, opened government with a Freedom of Information executive order, increased under-represented groups in government and city contracts, opened the city's budget process for public input and participation, created a city-wide cultural plan that encouraged neighborhood festivals and events, and spearheaded efforts for the state's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday bill.

The public can view the centennial celebration via live stream on Mayor Lightfoot's social media pages.

The MHWLC, a 501c.3 Illinois nonprofit organization, was established in 2013 and is comprised of a diverse group of visionary civic leaders who share a conviction that a unified effort is essential to keep Mayor Washington's memory and legacy alive.

###