



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT AND THE CHICAGO CITY COUNCIL COMMEMORATE
THE 1919 RED SUMMER**

*A resolution set forth in city council formally recognizes the 100th anniversary of the 1919
Chicago Race Riots*

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and Chicago City Council today commemorated the 1919 Race Riots with a resolution that calls for all of Chicago to put aside the prejudices that gave rise to the Red Summer in 1919 which resulted in the deaths of 38 people and injuries to hundreds more. The resolution calls for all of Chicago to come together as one city that works for the good of the whole.

“Those who don’t remember the past are doomed to repeat it, and we should especially never forget the atrocities that remind us what happens when hate is allowed to fester and grow,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “As we commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 1919 Race Riots, we must use this occasion to recommit ourselves to creating a city that is not divided by race, ethnic or economic lines, but rather to join together as city with the shared goal of building Chicago around one future and single shared destiny.”

Marked as the Red Summer of 1919, events began when 17-year-old Eugene Williams was stoned and drowned when his raft crossed the unofficial barrier between Chicago’s white and black beaches on July 27. From Little Italy to Englewood, the next seven days were stained by stop and go mob attacks and arson committed by young white gang members. Black residents banded together to fend off the white mobs firing at the mobs from rooftops and out of windows.

The police were unable to quell the rioting, and the Illinois National Guard was called to intervene. By the end of August 3, 1919, 38 people were dead, 537 injured, and more than 1,000 homeless due to arson.

“I am proud that one of my first significant acts as Chief Equity Officer is to work to publicly acknowledge this part of Chicago’s history which grounds our work for a more equitable, fair and just city,” said Candace Moore, Chief Equity Officer. “Chicago is an amazing city, but there is red on its ledger – and we will use this occasion to ensure that we have healed from the events of the past, learn from them, and move toward a future formed on common ground.”



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Mayor Lightfoot's racial equity policy agenda and Office of Equity and Racial Justice will be led by Moore and is the first of its kind for the City of Chicago. Additionally, the Mayor will hold public meetings to engage leaders in a listening session with community members on racial equity.

A copy of the resolution will be permanently filed with the City Clerk's Office.

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