

**MEMORIAL RESOLUTION RE: VELMA F. THOMAS,
SENIOR EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT, OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

WHEREAS, after over 54 years of faithful and dedicated service, Velma F. Thomas passed away on November 26, 2003; and

WHEREAS, Velma F. Thomas was born in Chicago and graduated from both a CPS elementary and high school; and

WHEREAS, Velma F. Thomas received her Bachelor's degree in Education from the Chicago Teachers College and her Master's degree in Education Administration from DePaul University; and

WHEREAS, Velma F. Thomas taught in the primary, intermediate and upper elementary grades before she was transferred to Central Office in 1965 to establish the parent component of the newly funded Head Start program; and

WHEREAS, in 1969, Velma F. Thomas was appointed director of the Head Start program, and in 1990 became the director of the Department of Early Childhood Education at the Chicago Public Schools. As director, Velma F. Thomas was responsible for the management of preschool and special primary programs in the Chicago Public Schools serving over 63,000 children; and

WHEREAS, during her tenure at Chicago Public Schools, Velma F. Thomas was essential in the formulation and expansion of the early education programs in the city of Chicago and nationwide, including such programs as State Prekindergarten, Child-Parent Center, and Head Start; and

WHEREAS, Velma F. Thomas was active on many public and private committees, serving on such boards as the Governor's Work Group on Early Childhood of the State of Illinois; the Early Childhood Advisory Committee of Chicago State University; the Citywide Colleges of Early Childhood Advisory Committee; and, the Mayor's Committee on Infant Mortality; and

WHEREAS, Velma F. Thomas has been honored with such distinctions as the City of Chicago's Department of Human Services "Service Award", the Chicago Association for the Education of Young Children's annual "Service to Children" Award, recognition by the Center for Economic Education of DePaul University, and named as a finalist for the 2003 Kathy Osterman Awards; and

WHEREAS, Velma F. Thomas will be remembered as a leader, mentor, innovator, and friend; and

WHEREAS, Velma F. Thomas' devotion and firm determination to improve the quality of education for countless Chicago Public Schools students has been invaluable.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the President and Members of the Board of Education of the City of Chicago, gathered here this 17th day of December, 2003 do hereby extend to the family of Velma F. Thomas our deepest sympathy and offer our sincere gratitude for Velma F. Thomas' contributions to the education and development of the children of Chicago.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a suitable copy of this Memorial Resolution be made available to the family of Velma F. Thomas.