

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION HONORING MERCEDES A. LAING

WHEREAS, Mercedes A. Laing, a dedicated and recognized civic leader in the City of Chicago and the State of Illinois, passed away on Tuesday, June 17, 2008; and

WHEREAS, Mercedes A. Laing received her bachelor's degree in History and Literature from Harvard-Radcliffe College in 1977 and her Juris Doctor degree from Yale Law School in 1984, where she served as an editor of the Yale Law Journal; and

WHEREAS, Mercedes A. Laing joined the Chicago Public Schools in 2006 as Director of External Affairs, overseeing internal and external communications and relationships for the Chicago Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, prior to joining the Chicago Public Schools, Mercedes A. Laing had over twenty years of law, government, business and nonprofit experience in the City of Chicago, serving in such capacities as the Urban Issues Director for United States Senator Paul Simon, the founding director of the World Trade Center Chicago African Trade Institute, the founder and CEO of Gnial, Inc, and a partner at the law firm of Holland & Knight; and

WHEREAS, from 1996 to 2006, Mercedes A. Laing served as a board member of the Chicago Community Trust, supporting initiatives and programs that targeted African-American and Hispanic communities. Additionally, while at the Chicago Community Trust, she created the African-American Legacy Initiative and helped to develop a policy that guaranteed diversity among the trust's grant recipients; and

WHEREAS, Mercedes A. Laing served as a member on numerous other civic and philanthropic boards, including the Children's Memorial Foundation, the Illinois Women's Institute for Leadership, the Democratic National Committee, Roosevelt University, the Illinois Facilities Fund and Harvard University; and

WHEREAS, Mercedes A. Laing will be remembered as an advisor, leader, advocate, pioneer and friend; and

WHEREAS, Mercedes A. Laing's commitment to, and tireless efforts on behalf of, countless Chicago public school students and the City of Chicago has been invaluable and will always be appreciated.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the President and Members of the Board of Education of the City of Chicago, gathered here this 25th day of June, 2008, do hereby extend to the family of Mercedes A. Laing our deepest sympathy and offer our sincere gratitude for all of the contributions that Mercedes A. Laing made to our efforts to educate, inspire and transform the children of Chicago.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a suitable copy of this Memorial Resolution be made available to the family of Mercedes A. Laing.