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Eugene "Gene" Moore  
Cook County Recorder of Deeds  
Date: 04/09/2010 10:07 AM Pg: 1 of 7

**Notice to Recorder:**

**This document should be recorded against the following PINs:**

**20-10-108-001-0000**

**20-10-209-008-0000**

**20-27-230-025-0000**

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The following is said ordinance as passed:

WHEREAS, Pursuant to the procedures set forth in the Municipal Code of Chicago (the "Municipal Code"), §§ 2-120-130 through -690, the Commission on Chicago landmarks (the "Commission") has determined that the following buildings associated with the Chicago Black Renaissance Literary Movement are each individually worthy of Chicago landmark designation: the George Cleveland Hall Branch, Chicago Public Library, 4801 South Michigan Avenue (the "Hall Branch Library"); the Gwendolyn Brooks House, 7428 South Evans Avenue (the "Brooks House"); and the Richard Wright House, 4831 South Vincennes Avenue (the "Wright House"), as more precisely described in Exhibit 1 attached hereto and incorporated herein (the "Buildings"), meet three criteria for landmark designation as set forth in § 2-120-620 (1), (3) and (6) of the Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, The Hall Branch Library also meets the criteria for landmark designation as set forth in § 2-120-620 (4) of the Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, The Buildings -- two of the homes of nationally prominent writers and one a pioneering cultural institution -- are associated with the Chicago Black Renaissance, the literary movement that emerged from the surge of artistic expression, community organizing, and social activity in Chicago's African-American community from the 1930s through the 1950s in the pre-Civil Rights years. Through the tumultuous years of the Depression, World War II, and a second "Great Migration" of African-Americans to an almost completely segregated Chicago, this interconnected effort by artists, writers, scholars, and activists promoted the study of black history, art and politics, to inform social protest against racism and discrimination in the years leading up to the 1960s Civil Rights movement. During this dynamic era, Chicago was a national center of urban African-American art, blues and jazz, dance, theater, poetry and fiction; and

WHEREAS, The Buildings possess strong historic associations with important literary figures of the Chicago Black Renaissance. The Chicago Black Renaissance literary movement was born of diverse creative and intellectual forces in Chicago's African-American community, and yielded such acclaimed 20<sup>th</sup>-century writers as Richard Wright (1908 -- 1960) and Gwendolyn Brooks (1917 -- 2000). These pioneering writers drew from their personal experiences and observations in Chicago and elsewhere to illuminate the dehumanizing effects of racial prejudice. Their eloquent and powerful novels and poems vividly depicted the spectrum of racism against African-Americans during the Jim Crow era through the years leading up to the modern Civil Rights movement -- ranging from wide-spread segregation and institutionalized discrimination to glaring acts of brutality and violence; and

WHEREAS, The Wright House possesses significance for its association with author Richard Wright. During the ten (10) years that he lived and worked in Chicago and the following decade of his continued close association with the city, Richard Wright was a galvanizing force of the Chicago Black Renaissance literary movement. In the second-floor apartment of the two-flat building at 4831 South Vincennes Avenue, where Wright

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resided with his family from 1929 to 1932, he effectively began his professional literary career with his first novel, *Lawd Today!*, which was published posthumously in 1963. Richard Wright's most famous and influential books, *Native Son* (1940) and his autobiography, *Black Boy* (1945), drew in large part from his life experience in Chicago and established him as one of the revered authors of his generation and propelled him to international fame. Controversial and powerful, these seminal texts are credited with forever changing American culture and redefining the portrayal of the Black experience in American literature; and

WHEREAS, The Brooks House possesses significance for its association with poet Gwendolyn Brooks. A prolific author, Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, professor, and life-long resident of Chicago, Gwendolyn Brooks resided at 7428 South Evans Avenue for more than four (4) decades (1953 -- 1994) -- the majority of her adult life. Like her home, her modest and unassuming lifestyle in no way reflected the international acclaim and critical recognition that her poetry received. Brooks, a dominant figure of 20<sup>th</sup>-century American poetry, is often regarded by literary critics as an "American poetic original". Brooks' first collection of poems, *A Street in Bronzeville*, appeared in 1945, and was followed by *Annie Allen* (1949), *Maud Martha* (1953), and *The Bean Eaters* (1960). Considered to be one of the United States most significant poets, Brooks' poetry bridged the Chicago Black Renaissance literary movement and its aftermath, and was a leading force in the establishment of a multiracial, multiethnic American artistic heritage; and

WHEREAS, The Hall Branch Library possesses significance for its association with Vivian G. Harsh. A pioneering leader in the movement to foster and preserve African-American history, Vivian G. Harsh was the first African-American librarian to serve as the director of a branch library in the Chicago Public Library system. Harsh was the founder of the "Special Negro Collection", an invaluable resource to the writers of the Chicago Black Renaissance and subsequent generations of researchers, that has grown into the largest repository of its kind in the Midwest. Harsh's innovative programming, such as the women's "Reading Guidance Clinic" which developed into one of America's first African-American book groups and the "Book Review and Lecture Forum", brought library patrons together with the major African-American writers and intellectuals of the day, fostered the Chicago Black Renaissance and established the George Cleveland Hall Library as an important intellectual center in Bronzeville; and

WHEREAS, The Hall Branch Library is significant for its "modernistic" architectural style that reflects the varied efforts in the late 1920s and 1930s to design contemporary buildings in a synthesis of historic and non-historic forms and ornament. Building ornament combines Classical-style keystones, arches, and copings and Art Deco-style, low-relief, abstracted-floral panels and copings; and

WHEREAS, The Hall Branch Library's finely-crafted central circulation space, a spatially-dramatic two-story octagonal entrance hall, features Classical Revival-style wood paneling ornamented with tall calved pilasters covering lower walls, while above plaster walls are punctuated by rectangular clerestory windows; and

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WHEREAS, The Hall Branch Library is an unusual and significant library building in the context of Chicago architecture. Compared to most neighborhood branch libraries built before World War II, the Hall Library is a dramatically-designed "modernistic" building meant to stand out in the Bronzeville neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, The Hall Branch Library, the Brooks House, and the Wright House, each demonstrate and commemorate the Chicago Black Renaissance literary movement, the interconnected effort by artists, writers, scholars, and activists to promote the study of black history, art and politics, to inform social protest against racism and discrimination in the years leading to the modern Civil Rights era. During this dynamic era, Chicago was a national center of urban African-American art, blues and jazz, dance, theater, poetry and fiction; and

WHEREAS, Each of the Buildings retains more than sufficient physical integrity to express its "historic, community, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value" as required by § 2-120-630 of the Municipal Code, through its site, context, and overall design quality. Each building retains the majority of its historic materials, design, and detailing to convey its architectural and historic values; now, therefore,

*Be It Ordained by the City Council of the City of Chicago:*

SECTION 1. The above recitals are expressly incorporated in and made a part of this ordinance as though fully set forth herein.

SECTION 2. Each of the Buildings is hereby individually designated as a Chicago landmark in accordance with the provisions of the Landmarks ordinance and the rules and regulations adopted by the Commission.

SECTION 3. The significant historical and architectural features of the Buildings are all exterior elevations, including rooflines, of the Buildings; and the double-height main interior circulation space of the Hall Library.

SECTION 4. The Commission is hereby directed to create a suitable plaque appropriately identifying each said landmark and to affix the plaque on or near each property designated as a Chicago landmark in accordance with the provisions of § 2-120-700 of the Municipal Code.

SECTION 5. The Commission is directed to comply with the provisions of § 2-120-720 of the Municipal Code, regarding notification of said designation.

SECTION 6. This ordinance shall take effect upon its passage and approval.

Exhibit 1 referred to in this ordinance reads as follows:

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*Exhibit 1.*

*George Cleveland Hall Branch Library.*

*Property Description.*

Legal Description:

Lots 21, 22, 23, and 24 in Anna Price's Subdivision of the northwest quarter of the northwest quarter of Section 10, Township 38 North, Range 14, East of the Third Principal Meridian, in Cook County, Illinois.

Address Commonly Known As:

4801 South Michigan Avenue.

Permanent Index Number:

20-10-108-001-0000.

*Richard Wright House.*

*Property Description.*

Legal Description:

The north 24 feet of Lot 18 in Block 2 in Snow and Dickinson's Subdivision of the southeast quarter of the northwest quarter of the northeast quarter of Section 10, Township 38 North, Range 14, East of the Third Principal Meridian, in Cook County, Illinois.

Address Commonly Known As:

4831 South Vincennes Avenue.

Permanent Index Number:

20-10-209-008-0000.

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*Gwendolyn Brooks House.*

*Property Description.*

Legal Description:

Lot 12 and the south 6¼ feet PF Lot 11 in Block 2 in the subdivision of the north half of Block 4 in Brookline, a subdivision of the southeast quarter of the northeast quarter of Section 27, Township 38 North, Range 14, East of the Third Principal Meridian, in Cook County, Illinois.

Address Commonly Known As:

7428 South Evans Avenue.

Permanent Index Number:

20-27-230-025-0000.

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STATE OF ILLINOIS )  
 )SS.  
 COUNTY OF COOK )

I, MIGUEL DEL VALLE, City Clerk of the City of Chicago in the County of Cook and State of Illinois, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that the annexed and foregoing is a true and correct copy of that certain ordinance now on file in my office designating Buildings Associated with Chicago Black Renaissance Literary Movement as Chicago Landmark.

I DO FURTHER CERTIFY that the said ordinance was passed by the City Council of the said City of Chicago on the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) day of February, 2010.

I DO FURTHER CERTIFY that the vote on the question of the passage of the said ordinance by the said City Council was taken by yeas and nays and recorded in the Journal of the Proceedings of the said City Council, and that the result of said vote so taken was as follows, to wit:

Yeas 46 Nays 0

I DO FURTHER CERTIFY that the said ordinance was delivered to the Mayor of the said City of Chicago after the passage thereof by the said City Council, without delay, by the City Clerk of the said City of Chicago, and that the said Mayor failed to return the said ordinance to the said City Council with his written objections thereto at the next regular meeting of the said City Council occurring not less than five (5) days after the passage of the said ordinance.

I DO FURTHER CERTIFY that the original, of which the foregoing is a true copy, is entrusted to my care for safe keeping, and that I am the lawful keeper of the same.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the corporate seal of the City of Chicago aforesaid, at the said City, in the County and State aforesaid, this thirty-first (31<sup>st</sup>) day of March, 2010.

[V.E.]

  
 MIGUEL DEL VALLE, City Clerk