

P R O C L A M A T I O N

HONORING OAK PARK CENETARIANS:

ESSIE POUGH

FEBRUARY 2026

HONORING MRS. ESSIE POUGH ON THE OCCASION OF HER 100TH BIRTHDAY

WHEREAS, in February 2026, Mrs. Essie Pough joyfully celebrated her 100th birthday, marking a century of life, legacy, and enduring impact; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Pough was born in 1926, in rural Mississippi and later migrated to Chicago, Illinois, with her husband in pursuit of greater opportunity and a better life; and

WHEREAS, over the course of 46 years of distinguished public service, Mrs. Pough dedicated her professional life to serving the residents of Illinois, beginning her career when the agency was known as the Illinois Department of Public Aid (IDSH) and retiring in 2014; and

WHEREAS, her commitment to those she served led her to learn Spanish to better assist Spanish-speaking residents of Humboldt Park, exemplifying her belief that public service requires both competence and compassion; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Pough's legacy extends far beyond her profession, as she raised eight children and is blessed with 19 grandchildren, 25 great-grandchildren, 26 great-great-grandchildren and counting; and

WHEREAS, for more than 50 years she has faithfully served through her church community, first at United Missionary Baptist Church and now as an active member of Living Word Christian Center, where she continues to lend her voice to the choir; and

WHEREAS, she has remained civically engaged throughout her lifetime, advocating for voting rights, civic participation, and youth development, and has witnessed and participated in historic moments, including casting her vote for

Harold Washington and Barack Obama and fellowshiping with First Lady Michelle Obama; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Pough continued to share her gifts and faith by writing and recording her debut song, "Jesus Reigns Forever," at age 94, earning national recognition and demonstrating that purpose does not retire; and

WHEREAS, at 100 years of age, Mrs. Pough continues to embody resilience, faith, service, and joy through her active life of gardening, bowling, reading scripture, and nurturing generations of family and community;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED by the President and Board of Trustees of the Village of Oak Park that we proudly recognize and celebrate *Mrs. Essie Pough on the occasion of her 100th birthday*, honoring a century of steadfast faith, historic witness, public service, and enduring love; and

BE IT FURTHER PROCLAIMED that Mrs. Essie Pough is recognized as the first centenarian proclaimed by the Village of Oak Park in 2026 and as a living testament to a life fully lived across one hundred remarkable years.

DATED this 17th day of February 2026.

Vicki Scaman
Village President

ATTEST

Christina M. Waters
Village Clerk