

RESOLUTION NUMBER 149

Ronald Kennedy

WHEREAS, Ronald Kennedy was born on July 12, 1941. Family members describe Ronald as a quiet youth with a serious demeanor, a “can do” attitude, a wicked sense of humor and a colorful personality. He was always offering good advice to anyone who would listen. His excitement was contagious as he shared all kinds of new mechanical inventions or new projects to you. He was never bored or boring. If you needed him, he was there. Period. When you called, he came; and

WHEREAS, Ronald’s parents Samuel and Frances (Johnson) Kennedy cherished their children: Ronald, Joyce, Katherine, Terry and Gary. Ronald was the eldest of the five. Ronald was nicknamed “Butch”, a name many feared or respected. Ronald helped a lot of people in the neighborhood and across the metro area. Kathy said her brother was a “hero”. His other sister Joyce said Ronald’s philosophy in life was to challenge any and all obstacles with fervor always with a “can do” attitude.; and

WHEREAS, before Ron graduated from high school at the age of 17 he enlisted in the Marine Corps. He served on active duty as a Mortar Shell Carrier in the Second Marine Corps Division. His brother Gary re-told the story of Ronald’s heroism one weekend while on leave in Mexico. Ronald and one of his Mexican friends were both arrested in Mexico but Ronald was quickly released. Ronald went back to the base to get some weapons and mobilize other Marines to go rescue his friend. Everything worked out and his fellow Marines recognized Ronald’s type of loyalty and heroism. Ronald served in the Marines for four years and two more years in the MC Reserves.

WHEREAS, Ronald grew up in a political family. He helped run various political campaigns over a 45 year span for aldermanic races in the 18th Ward initially for his father and later his brother Terry. He held organize the workers on the polls and helped support the work of the political party. He also shared invaluable political strategies and advice to the Aldermen Kennedy’s Campaign Manager. In his own career, Ronald worked for ten years as Sheriff in the City of St. Louis. He received several commendations, including one for apprehending a suspect without firing one single bullet. The department labeled Ronald a “hero” ; and

WHEREAS, after leaving the Sheriff’s Department, Ronald worked with his uncle Hallester Kennedy who owned a bail bond company. His uncle also owned rental property. He taught Ronald how to rehab homes installing plumbing, electrical wiring, painting, carpentry and flooring. He created an apprenticeship program and taught youth and young adults how to do many of the trades. Ronald was known as a “jack-of-all-trades” and later became a General Contractor. Because he recognized his natural skills and high intelligence, Uncle Hallester tricked Ronald into taking his GED test by giving him a dare; he passed his GED without studying one day for it. Ronald later attended Forest Park and completed his Associate Degree; and

WHEREAS, Ronald also supported the growth of small and non profit businesses. He was also there to help support the work of Progressive Emporium & Education Center, Sudan Illustrators, TEACH Society and other cultural arts groups; and

WHEREAS, Ronald is preceded in death by his parents, Samuel and Frances Kennedy. He leaves to celebrate his life; children, Valencia Kennedy, Timothy Kennedy, Ronald Powell, former spouse Gwen Frierson, Uncle William [Floyd] Johnson (Maria); sisters Joyce Kennedy and Katherine Kennedy, (Terry) Holt; twin brothers Terry Kennedy and Gary Kennedy; a host of grandchildren and great grandchildren, a number of loving friends and family.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Aldermen of the City of St. Louis that we pause to remember the life of Ronald Kennedy and we join with his many friends in expressing our sorrow at his passing, and we further direct the Clerk of this Board to spread a copy of this Resolution across the minutes of these proceedings and to prepare a memorial copy for presentation to the Kennedy family, at a time and place deemed appropriate by the Sponsor.

Introduced on the 24th day of October, 2014 by:

Honorable Samuel L. Moore Alderman 4th Ward

Adopted this the 24th day of October, 2014 as attested by:

David W. Sweeney
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

Lewis E. Reed
President, Board of Aldermen