

RESOLUTION NUMBER 138
THE APPROPRIATION OF THE NAME HOMER G. PHILLIPS HOSPITAL

WHEREAS, Homer G. Phillips grew up in Sedalia, Missouri, the son of a Methodist minister who had been a slave. Mr. Phillips studied law at the Historic Black College, Howard University in Washington D.C. and moved to St. Louis just before the World's Fair in 1904. In St. Louis, he married Ida Perle Alexander and established himself as a lawyer; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Phillips became prominent in both civil rights and politics and was Founder of the Citizens' Liberty League, advocating for Blacks after St. Louis City residents voted in 1916 to mandate segregation in housing. Mr. Phillips was influential in the local Republican Party, which was a common affiliation for Blacks before the New Deal; and

WHEREAS, in the 1920's, in the segregated City of St. Louis, there were two Public City Owned Hospitals, City Hospital Number 1, which Whites in the City of St. Louis used, and City Hospital Number 2, a former medical college in the Mill Creek Valley which was woefully inadequate, segregated and Blacks were forced to use; and

WHEREAS, in 1923, the City of St. Louis set aside money from a bond issue for a new hospital. Blacks wanted "their" new city owned public hospital in a Black neighborhood. White doctors wanted the new hospital next to City Hospital Number 1, which was located south of downtown. **Mr. Homer G. Phillips persuaded city officials to build the new hospital at St. Ferdinand Avenue and Whittier Street, in the Ville neighborhood**, which at the time was the home to the Black Business Class; and

WHEREAS, Homer G. Phillips served his clients and the Black Community with enthusiasm and intensity, and his passion made him a few enemies. On the morning of June 18, 1931, Phillips left his home at 1121 Aubert Avenue, near Fountain Park, and walked to Delmar Boulevard to catch a streetcar downtown. Two men approached him and one or both of them opened fire. Phillips, 51, died on the sidewalk; and

WHEREAS, thousands of mourners packed St. Paul AME Church, which was then located at Leffingwell and Lawton Avenues, for Phillips's funeral. In 1931, after Mr. Homer G. Phillips's murder, **The St. Louis City Board of Aldermen posthumously voted to name the new Black Public Hospital in his memory and thus the historic Homer G. Phillips Hospital became a institutional cultural icon in the historic Ville Neighborhood**; and

WHEREAS, the name Homer G. Phillips Hospital, is closely associated with the Ville Neighborhood, as are many of the other institutional icons such as Sumner High School, Antioch Baptist Church, St. James AME Church, James House Senior Housing, St. Matthews Apostle Parish, St. Phillips Lutheran Church, Annie Malone Children's Home, and The Tandy Community Center, and said Institutions and their names are the soul of the Ville Neighborhood and have played a vital and integral role in the community's life; and

WHEREAS, Homer G. Phillips Hospital, opened in 1937 in the proud Ville Neighborhood at St. Ferdinand Avenue and Whittier Street, **the very site that Mr. Homer G. Phillips himself chose for the hospital**. The opening of the hospital was a major event in the City and thousands of people lined the streets for blocks around the hospital. Among the guests of honor at the dedication of the hospital were Missouri Governor Lloyd C. Stark; The US Secretary of Interior, the Honorable Harold I. Ickes; Congressman Thomas Hennings Jr. and City Comptroller Louis Holte; and

WHEREAS, Homer G. Phillips Hospital remained a crucial hospital for Blacks, the Ville Neighborhood and surrounding communities until it was closed in 1979 by then St. Louis City Mayor Jim Conway, it now serves as a senior housing center; and

WHEREAS, in recent years a developer, Mr. Paul McKee, who has received massive financial incentives from the City of St. Louis, has started a redevelopment project at or near the site of the old Pruitt Igoe Housing Project Site and one of the projects in the development includes a proposed private 3 bed clinic, urgent care or medical center, depending on the various view of the proposal. Currently, the proposed site is a private 3 room clinic and the developer has proposed to name the project the Homer G. Phillips Hospital; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Paul McKee proposal for a new medical facility in North St. Louis is admirable and supported in a community that lacks medical facilities, he has made the proposal to appropriate the name Homer G. Phillips Hospital, without meeting with or initiating conversation with the Ville Neighborhood, the Board of Aldermen, or other members of the African American Community to allow them to weigh in on what many believe to be the inappropriate cultural appropriation of a name that is so closely aligned with the Ville Neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, the proposed naming of a private 3 bed clinic or hospital at this new development in the Carr Square Neighborhood, has caused The Honorable Tishaura O. Jones, the Mayor of the City of St. Louis, The Honorable Darlene Green, Comptroller of the City of St. Louis, State Senator of the 4th District, The Honorable Rasheen Aldridge, State Representative of the 77th District, The Honorable Mavis Thompson, License Collector of the City of St. Louis, several Honorable members of the Board of Aldermen, Ms. Yvonne Jones, President of

the Homer G. Phillips Nurses Alumni, several long-time community activists such as Ms. Ollie Stewart, Mr. Percy Green, Ms. Jamala Rogers, Mr. Wale A. Amusa, Ms. Zenobia Thompson and Ms. Pamela Talley, to call for the developer, Mr. Paul McKee and the Board of Directors of the private 3 bed clinic or hospital, to choose a more appropriate name for this new project that **does not, Inappropriately, Culturally, Appropriate the Homer G. Phillips Hospital name.**

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this Honorable Board of Aldermen of the City of St. Louis finds that while the developer proposal for a new medical facility in North St. Louis is admirable, the name Homer G. Phillips Hospital is an asset that is best kept in the Ville Neighborhood; that this neighborhood cultural iconic name should not be Inappropriately, Culturally, Appropriated by anyone; and that we suggest the developer find a name that is more suited for the neighborhood for which the medical facility is proposed, as there are many leaders from that community who have substantially contributed to the community and to which naming a new medical facility after them would be a wonderful tribute.

WE FURTHER DIRECT, the Clerk of the Board of Aldermen, to spread a copy of this Resolution across the minutes of this proceeding and to mail a copy of this resolution and a letter written by the sponsors of this Resolution, to the developer, Mr. Paul McKee and the Board of Directors of the proposed private medical project, advising them of our support of their new medical project, but also advising them of this Board's position opposing their project Inappropriately, Culturally, Appropriating the Homer G. Phillips Hospital name. Lastly, this Board invites Mr. Paul McKee and the Board of Directors of the proposed private medical project to appear before this esteemed Board to answer inquiries regarding their attempt to appropriate the Homer G. Phillips Hospital name and helping them to find a more appropriate name for their proposed medical project.

Introduced this 19th day of November, 2021 by:

The Honorable Sharon Tyus, Alderwoman, 1st Ward

The Honorable Lewis Reed, President Board of Aldermen

The Honorable Dwindlerlin Evans, Alderwoman 4th Ward

The Honorable Dan Guenther, Alderman 9th Ward

The Honorable Megan Green, Alderwoman 15th Ward

The Honorable Christine Ingrassia, Alderwoman 6th Ward

The Honorable Annie Rice, Alderwoman 8th Ward

The Honorable Joseph Vaccaro, Alderman 23rd Ward

The Honorable Lisa Middlebrook, Alderwoman 2nd Ward

The Honorable Shameem Clark-Hubbard, Alderman 26th Ward

The Honorable Shane Cohn, Alderman 25th Ward

The Honorable Jesse Todd, Alderman 18th Ward

The Honorable Sarah Martin, Alderwoman 11th Ward

The Honorable Bill Stephens, Alderman 12th Ward

The Honorable Anne Schweitzer, Alderwoman 13th Ward

The Honorable Brandon Bosley, Alderman 3rd Ward

The Honorable Carol Howard, Alderwoman 14th Ward

The Honorable Cara Spencer, Alderwoman 20th Ward

The Honorable Pamela Boyd, Alderwoman 27th Ward

Adopted 10th day of December, 2021 as attested by:

Terry Kennedy
Clerk, Board of Alderman

Lewis E. Reed
President, Board of Alderman