

RESOLUTION NUMBER 37
HONORING THE INSTALLATION OF RYAN M. BRANSON AND THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE TUSCAN LODGE NUMBER 360

WHEREAS, it has come to the attention of this Honorable Board of Aldermen of the City of St. Louis of the 150TH Anniversary of the Tuscan Lodge Number 360 of the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons and the installation of Brother Ryan Michael Branson, Sr as its Worshipful Master; and

WHEREAS, Freemasonry began 303 years ago, in 1717, with what is now recognized as the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) with the first American Lodge being established 13 years later in Philadelphia in 1730 where Benjamin Franklin was a founding member however, at that time, the order did not admit members of African descent; and

WHEREAS, after more than five decades of struggle and winning the right to participate, people of African descent were able to participate as members of the Freemasons which lead to Prince Hall and others establishing African Lodge No. 459 on September 29, 1784. However, descendants of African people were still discriminated against and were only allowed to participate within the Fraternity amongst themselves, separated from White Men, under “Separate and Unequal”; and

WHEREAS, since that day and with much fewer resources as the “White Lodges” the Prince Hall Masons have been a staple in America heroically and continuously fighting for justice and the ending of racial discrimination, providing various philanthropic services, establishing lodges and other institutions all which have helped to make the Freemasons a more just and equitable fraternal order as well as improving all of America; and

WHEREAS, on Saturday, September 5, 2020 Brother Ryan M. Branson, Sr. will be installed as the Worshipful Master of the Tuscan Lodge Number 360 of the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons for their 2020 – 2021 Masonic Calendar; and

WHEREAS, Brother Branson, has a rich history of community service, involvement and achievement too long to be outlined any one writing but is a native of St. Louis and graduated from Soldan International High Scholl in 2004; and

WHEREAS, Ryan became a member of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Illinois by way of the prestigious Southern Cross Lodge Number 112 in East St. Louis, Illinois as a 'Lewis' Legacy of his grandfather Bro. Vertis Branson, Sr; and

WHEREAS, after his induction into the Masonic Order, he joined the Missouri Air National Guard and served from 2004 to 2008. Ryan later returned home and attended Harris-Stowe State University where he became a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc, and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice in 2013; and

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2009 Ryan became an Affiliated Member of the Grand Lodge of Illinois, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons by way of Collinsville Lodge Number 712, in Collinsville, Illinois. Moreover, on June 15th, 2010 Ryan became Affiliated as a Multiple Member of the Grand Lodge of Missouri, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons by way of the Historic Tuscan Lodge Number 360 in St. Louis, Missouri where he served in the following capacities: Junior Steward; Junior Deacon; Senior Deacon; Junior Warden; and finally, the first African-American & Sesquicentennial Worshipful Master; and

WHEREAS, being a proven and able leader Ryan also attained membership within the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry for the United States of America, Northern Masonic Jurisdiction; the General Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons, International and served as the first African-American High Priest of Missouri within Oriental-Rabboni Chapter Number 78 in Webster Groves; the General Grand Council of

Cryptic Masons, International; The Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America; the Grand Council Allied Masonic Degrees of the United States of America, an Honorary and Invitational Body Dedicated to Masonic Research and Education; and the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Aldermen of the City of St. Louis that we pause in our deliberations to acknowledge the rich history of the Prince Hall Masons and the 150th Anniversary of Tuscan Lodge Number 360 of the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons and by adoption of this Resolution recognize the many achievements of Brother Ryan M. Branson. We further congratulate him on being installed as the Worshipful Master of the Lodge for the 2020-2021 Masonic Calendar and direct the Clerk of this Board to spread a copy of this Resolution across the minutes of these proceedings and to prepare a commemorative copy to the end that it might be presented at a time and place and to those deemed appropriate by its sponsor.

**Introduced this 18th day of September, 2020 by:
The Honorable Marlene Davis, Alderman 19th Ward**

Adopted this 18th day of September, 2020 as attested by:

**Terry Kennedy
Clerk, Board of Aldermen**

**Lewis Reed
President, Board of Aldermen**