

RESOLUTION NUMBER 182

Okley Clark

WHEREAS, Okley Clark was born January 26, 1916, in Thomasville, Arkansas, an all-African American town that was destroyed by the Klansmen; he and his other brothers and sisters were raised by several close relatives due to the untimely deaths of both parents from tuberculosis; in their homes he learned many valuable skills which prepared him for his life journey; and

WHEREAS, as a young man he moved to Chicago, Illinois, and quickly gained employment as a tailor; he married Bessie Scruggs and to this union three daughters were born, Merdean, Odessa, and Janice; he enjoys his grandchildren and great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, in 1941 he relocated his family to St. Louis, Missouri, and began working with the Terminal Railroad as a messenger and freight car switcher; he has maintained a strong relationship with a group of his former co-workers long after his working days were over; and

WHEREAS, he was young, energetic, intelligent, and hardworking, he sought to improve not only his life but the lives of others through remarkable service to the community, and the businesses he created to meet their needs; these establishments include ownership of Subway cleaners, Service Station Franchise, Ringside Athletic Club Inc, where many outstanding professional boxers trained, such as Archie Moore, Henry Armstrong, and Fernita Cox; and

WHEREAS, his Athletic organization gave many aspiring young boxers the opportunity to train and become disciplined men and to achieve higher opportunities and goals and led to the existence of the Senior Talent Boxing Association; alongside these efforts he developed a recording studio for local singing artists to record their music in the Ringside Studio; the Clark Sodding Company was one of the first African American-owned landscaping companies, and it received contracts for the landscaping of subdivisions, universities, highways, service stations, and other institutions of the metropolitan area; earlier on, he was very active in the 22nd Ward and is still committed to the work; and

WHEREAS, a man of many talents, concerns for society and his community He spends many, many hours gardening raising vegetables for family and friends. His love of photography and videography has given him a great collection of important civic and current events of our city, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, an active member of his church, Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church under the leadership of the Reverend Doctor Sammie E. Jones he gives of his time talent and treasure sharing his experiences and the blessings received as an inspiration to others.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Aldermen of the City of St. Louis that we pause to recognize and acknowledge the many accomplishments of Okley Clark and we congratulate him on his 100th birthday. 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 to the end that it may be presented to our honoree or his family at a time and place deemed appropriate by the Sponsor.

Introduced this 22nd day of January, 2016, by:

The Honorable Jeffrey L. Boyd, Alderman 22nd Ward

Adopted this 22nd day of January, 2016, as attested by

Tim O'Connell
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

Lewis E. Reed
President, Board of Aldermen