

RESOLUTION NUMBER 211

Vernona O. Gaines-Smith

WHEREAS, Vernona O. Gaines-Smith was born and reared in St. Louis, Missouri, and educated in the St. Louis Public Schools District; she graduated from Charles Sumner High School and later graduated from Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville; and

WHEREAS, upon entering the workforce she was ultimately employed by the Department of the Army Troop Support Command in the Acquisition Intern Program as a Contract Specialist; after graduation from the program, she worked for Aviation and Troop Command for 9½ years; following a 10-year break in service, she returned to federal contracting at the following duty stations: Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center-JC and JB Divisions, U.S Department of the Treasury, VA Contracting Office East; and

WHEREAS, she is a lifelong resident of the City of St. Louis, a place she truly loves; Vernona has been intricately involved in community betterment programs since 1979; she has served in capacities such as block captain, newsletter editor for block unit 1435, and treasurer for the 8th District Public Affairs Organization; also, she is recognized as a community leader and contact person by the Nuisance/Problem Property Division as well as the Circuit Attorney's Office; and

WHEREAS, her commitment to ensure that all residents have a safe and sustainable community in which to live inspired her to mobilize the Neighborhood Watch Team in the 3900 and 4000 blocks of Greer and Sullivan Avenues; her respect for law and order led her to enroll in the Citizen Police Academy where she was a model student and graduate of Class #9 in 1995; for five years following graduation, she participated in the Police Ride Along Program in the old 7th District; and

WHEREAS, Vernona freely shares information to enlighten and assist residents in reporting strategies to improve their neighborhood; she works tirelessly with block unit officers, Alderman Samuel L. Moore, and the Neighborhood Improvement Specialists to identify and report illegal activities which led to shut down of numerous derelict and drug houses in the 4th Ward over the years; Block Captain Vernona Smith created the Neighborhood Complaint form which has been adopted by the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department as a reporting tool addressing illegal/unsafe housing situations; in addition she devised the new Move In Package as an education tool for rental property owners and their tenants to better understand and comply with Ordinances for city neighborhoods, thereby improving neighborhood conditions within the 4th Ward; and

WHEREAS, Vernona has committed to work more closely with Alderman Samuel L. Moore, the Board of Aldermen, and Northside Housing Community Development, Inc. since retirement and to continue her community involvement; she is a member of St. Paul AME Church and the Afrikan Village and Cultural Center; she is also a Golden Life member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. St. Louis Alumni Chapter; and

WHEREAS, her children, grandchildren, family and friends believe her diligent efforts have helped make her community a better place in which to live and work.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Aldermen of the City of St. Louis that we pause in our deliberations to recognize and congratulate Vernona O. Gaines-Smith on her retirement and many achievements throughout the St. Louis community. 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 commemorative copy to the end that it may be presented at a time and place deemed appropriate by the Sponsor.

Introduced this 18th day of January, 2017, by:

The Honorable Samuel L. Moore, Alderman 4th Ward

Adopted this 18th day of January, 2017, as attested by

Timothy G. O'Connell
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

Lewis E. Reed
President, Board of Aldermen