

Resolution Number 29
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. Ariya Program

WHEREAS, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. was founded on January 13, 1913, by twenty-two visionary woman at Howard University and since that day for over 100 years Delta members have been actively involved in almost every major social movement in the United States; and

WHEREAS, St. Louis Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc established the Ariya program in 1994 and it has been one of their signature programs for the past 20 years; and

WHEREAS, the Ariya is a 6-month Rites of Passage program created by the St. Louis Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. for high school senior girls and is based upon the seven principles of Kwanzaa. The program is designed to help build character, shape leaders, develop scholars and allow the young ladies the right to move to a higher level of spiritual, social and educational development; and

WHEREAS, the participants in the Ariya program are called “Kwanzishas” and the program culminates with an “Ariya Ball”, which is a celebration that pronounces to the community that these participants have officially transitioned from young ladies into womanhood; and

WHEREAS, there is no queen or winner of the Ariya the young ladies vote amongst themselves as to whom they feel exemplifies the qualities of a strong Black woman and a true leader. This young lady is selected as the “Leader of the Kwanzishas”; and

WHEREAS, since its inception the Ariya program has worked with over “300” young ladies and young men, who serve as escorts at the Ariya Ball. The chapter has provided approximately \$805,000 in scholarship money since the program began and 100% of our participants have enrolled in a college, university or career training program, with 85% of the participants graduating and 55% having gone on to obtain post-graduate; and

WHEREAS, this year’s “Queen Mother” is Soror Mary McCauley, chairperson is Soror Gloria Reno, Esq. and the founder/creator of the Ariya program is Soror Elaine Williams. All of these sorors have provided invaluable support to the young ladies in this program. Special thanks are extended to the entire Ariya: Rites of Passage Committee and to all of the African Villages for their tireless support and dedication towards furthering the mission of this phenomenal.

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 honor the members the would like to extend sincere congratulations to the “15” dynamic young ladies who make up our 2013-2014 Ariya 20! Rites of Passage program of the St. Louis Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority and we thank them for their tireless efforts on behalf of the citizens of this community and we direct the Clerk of this Board to prepare a commemorative copy of this Resolution to the end that it may be presented to our honorees at a time and place deemed appropriate by the Sponsor.

Introduced on the 4th day of May, 2014 by:

Honorable Lewis E. Reed, President of the Board of Aldermen

Adopted this the 4th day of May, 2014 as attested:

David W. Sweeney
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

Lewis E. Reed
President, Board of Aldermen