

**Resolution Number 53**  
**Bertha Gilkey-Bonds**

**WHEREAS**, we pause to express our sadness and offer condolences to the family of our long-time friend and community organizer, Bertha Gilkey-Bonds, who was called to her reward on May 24, 2014; and

**WHEREAS**, Bertha Knox Gilkey was born in Arkansas on March 18th, 1948, to Willie and Irma Robinson; she moved to St. Louis in her early teens and was living with her mother in Cochran Gardens, a public housing complex, near downtown; and

**WHEREAS**, by 1969 she was active with tenants in a rent strike to improve conditions at the embattled housing complex, which was part of a city-wide group protesting issues at the St. Louis Housing Authority; and

**WHEREAS**, Bertha was so passionate about improving the living conditions of residents of public housing and low income families that she served on a citywide Tenant Affairs Board and was elected to head the Cochran Tenant Management Organization after being instrumental in persuading the city of St. Louis to move it to a tenant management model in 1976; and

**WHEREAS**, Bertha Gilkey was always committed to the idea that just because people are low- income that did not mean they should not have the same level of services that people with money had, so she organized the community to make history reforming public housing in St. Louis and across the nation; and

**WHEREAS**, the Cochran Tenant Management Corporation became the first of its kind in St. Louis. In a short time the new management rehabilitated Cochran Gardens into a relatively safe and comfortable place. Since 1978 the complex was modernized and outfitted with new engineering systems, owing both to Gilkey's fundraising skills and to Cochran's nearly downtown location that could not be ignored by city and federal authorities. By 1992 Cochran received \$33 million in federal aid, twice as much as the second-ranking St. Louis housing complex; and

**WHEREAS**, Gilkey was the subject of a 1993 NBC show Fired Up! The Bertha Gilkey Story produced by John Singleton and President George H. W. Bush visited Cochran Gardens in May 1991, commending tenant management and Betha Gilkey as a leader; and

**WHEREAS**, in addition to all her accomplishments, recognitions, and awards, Bertha was also a devoted mother to her two children, Antoine and Yvette, who shared her with the citizens of St. Louis or anywhere she was needed to fight the good fight.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOVED** by the Board of Aldermen of the City of St. Louis that we pause in our deliberations to recognize the great work and activism of Bertha Gilkey-Bonds and offer our condolences at her passing. 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 for presentation to the family of Bertha Gilkey at a time and place deemed appropriate by the Sponsor.

Introduced this 31<sup>st</sup> day of May, 2014 by:

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

Honorable Sharon Tyus, Alderwoman 1<sup>st</sup> Ward  
Honorable Dionne Flowers, Alderwoman 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward  
Honorable Freeman Bosley, Sr., Alderman 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward  
Honorable Samuel L. Moore, Alderman 4<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Tammika Hubbard, Alderwoman 5<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Christine Ingrassia, Alderwoman 6<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Phyllis Young, Alderwoman 7<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Stephen Conway, Alderman 8<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Joseph Vollmer, Alderman 10<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Thomas Albert Villa, Alderman 11<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Larry Arnowitz, Alderman 12<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Beth Murphy, Alderwoman 13<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Carol Howard, Alderwoman 14<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Jennifer Florida, Alderwoman 15<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Donna Baringer, Alderwoman 16<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Terry Kennedy, Alderman 18<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Marlene E. Davis, Alderwoman 19<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Craig Schmid, Alderman 20<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Antonio D. French, Alderman 21<sup>st</sup> Ward  
Honorable Jeffrey L. Boyd, Alderman 22<sup>nd</sup> Ward  
Honorable Joe Vaccaro, Alderman 23<sup>rd</sup> Ward  
Honorable Shane Cohn, Alderman 25<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Frank Williamson, Alderman 26<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Chris Carter, Alderman 27<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Lyda Krewson, Alderwoman 28<sup>th</sup> Ward

Adopted this 31<sup>st</sup> day of May, 2014 as attested by: