

**RESOLUTION NUMBER 76**  
**Roland Williams**

**WHEREAS**, growing up in an economically disadvantaged neighborhood in Rochester, NY, Youth Lifeline America's Founder & CEO, Roland Williams' childhood included many challenges at a young age. Whether poverty, drugs, gangs, promiscuity and/or uneducated behavior, Roland saw and heard a lot that would have a lasting impression; and

**WHEREAS**, after graduating from high school, Roland went on to receive a full athletic scholarship to Syracuse University. As a football player, Roland excelled. A three-year starter and All-Big East selection tight end, Roland won numerous awards; and

**WHEREAS**, academically, Roland also exceeded expectations. After earning his BS degree in Speech Communications with a minor in management, Roland continued his education and became the first Syracuse University football player ever admitted into the prestigious S.I Newhouse School of Public Communications Public Relations Masters program; and

**WHEREAS**, when not on the field or in the classroom, Roland also started the framework for his childhood dream of creating resources for youth. In his junior year, Roland started the Syracuse Jam Session, an outreach program that exposed thousands of inner-city youth to the Syracuse University campus and the collegiate population. Complete with a celebrity basketball game, educational community booths, entertainment, food, music and giveaways, the Syracuse Jam Session is still the largest charity event in University history coordinated by a student-athlete; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1998, Roland's college career ended when he was selected 98th overall in the NFL draft by the St. Louis Rams. During his rookie season with the Rams, he started in 14 games and earned Offensive Rookie of the Year honors. In 1999, he started all 16 games and was a part of the legendary "greatest show on turf" team who ultimately won Super Bowl XXXIV over the Tennessee Titans; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1999, Roland also formally realized his childhood dream by founding the "Roland Williams Youth Lifeline Foundation" with its purpose to harness the powerful influence of sports to download vital life skills to youth in upstate New York. Starting with his own capital, no paid staff, and working 60 hours a week out of his guest room, Roland coordinated the first ever Free Football and Life Skills Camp in his hometown of Rochester, NY; and

**WHEREAS**, following the camp, the response was astounding. His unique combination of sports, entertainment and education had captivated and inspired all involved with the program. After receiving feedback from dozens of athletes, entertainers and business professionals, Roland realized that his childhood vision had the potential to impact youth far beyond his hometown. At that moment, Youth Lifeline America was officially born. To assist with communicating the long-term vision of the charity, Roland altered the name of the charity, instantly making Youth Lifeline America one of the only non-profit organizations in history founded by a celebrity that did not bear his name or likeness. This enhancement allowed Youth Lifeline America to also be an inspirational magnet for collaborations with celebrities, business professionals and other non-profits.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Aldermen of the City of St. Louis that we pause in our deliberations to recognize many contributions of Roland Williams and 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 to our honoree at a time and place deemed appropriate by the Sponsor.

Introduced on the 27th day of June, 2012 by:

**Honorable Lewis E. Reed, President St. Louis City Board of Aldermen**  
**Honorable Antonio D. French, Alderman 21<sup>st</sup> Ward**

Adopted this the 29th day of June, 2012 as attested by:

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David W. Sweeney  
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

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Lewis E. Reed  
President, Board of Aldermen