

RESOLUTION NO. 105
Cedric Walker & UniverSoul Circus

WHEREAS, Cedric Walker is the founder and CEO of UniverSoul Circus; born in Baltimore, Maryland, Walker's entrepreneur spirit started at the young age of 6; he was determined to make money, so he shined shoes; and

WHEREAS, Walker was bitten by the entertainment bug in the early 1970s when he moved to Tuskegee to live with his uncle, who was a nightclub owner; that's where he met and later teamed up with a promising young musical group called the Commodores; and

WHEREAS, Walker struck out on his own in the 1980s when he organized the world's first Rap music tour featuring the likes of Run DMC, Salt N Pepa, and The Fat Boys; in the early 1990s, he underwrote and helped produce a couple of highly successful gospel plays, "Wicked Ways" and "A Good Man is Hard to Find"; and

WHEREAS, Walker and his associates began to look for new forms of family entertainment: their vision was to explore the various talents other than singing and dancing that black performers had to offer, to make a difference, to change the industry, creating growth and opportunity; that vision led him to create UniverSoul Circus; and

WHEREAS, the UniverSoul Circus was founded in 1994 to a wide demographic of spectators; it currently contains 75 performers and 12 acts; the circus is headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia; and

WHEREAS, the historic first show of "The Universal Big Top Circus," as it was originally named, took place in the parking lot of Fulton County Stadium in Atlanta; in those early days, from a financial standpoint, the circus lost money; but the show received rave reviews from critics and fans alike; the response inspired Walker to continue with his dream of running away with the circus; and

WHEREAS, by 1997 the circus tour grew to 10 cities, 19 cities in 1999, 31 cities in 2000, and 32 cities in 2005; a tour of South Africa, the first international destination, was completed in 2001.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Aldermen for the City of St. Louis that we pause in our deliberations to recognize the many contributions and selflessness of Mr. Cedric Walker and to celebrate the **UniverSoul Circus**, now playing to packed houses around the world. 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 on the 31st day of August, 2016, by:

The Honorable Lewis E. Reed, President, St. Louis Board of Aldermen

Adopted the 31st day of August, 2016, as attested by:

Timothy O'Connell
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

Lewis E. Reed
President, Board of Aldermen