

RESOLUTION NUMBER 107
25th Anniversary of Circus Flora

WHEREAS, we have been apprised that Circus Flora is celebrating its 25th Anniversary this year; and

WHEREAS, Circus Flora combines the magic of a one ring circus with theater techniques, an ensemble cast and a story line to create a “magical theater in a sawdust ring.” For the past 25 years, Circus Flora has had its audiences delighted with laughter.....gasping with astonishment.....and on its feet with applause! Once you experience Circus Flora, they know they will touch something in each of us that will keep us enchanted for years to come; and

WHEREAS, Gian Carlo Menotti originally commissioned Circus Flora for the 1986 Spoleto Festival USA. Based on the overwhelmingly positive response at its debut, Artistic Director/Producer, Ivor David Balding, together with Sheila and Sam Jewell and Alexandre Sacha Pavlata, established Circus Flora in 1987 as a permanent performing arts organization in St. Louis; and

WHEREAS, established as a theater company, Circus Flora specialized in an ensemble, one-ring circus - performed in a big top tent - accessible and affordable for all. This new performing arts organization set out to acquaint audiences with the joy and power of the classic, European-style circus; and

WHEREAS, Flora, for which the Circus is named, is an orphaned elephant that Balding rescued when her mother was killed by ivory poachers in Africa. For fifteen years, Flora was a beloved star of the Circus. In 2000, Flora retired from stage life and currently resides in the elephant sanctuary in Hohenwald, Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Circus Flora was a hit from the very beginning. Not content with a traditional circus, Balding set out to create a new formula – weaving separate acts together by the common thread of an engaging storyline; and

WHEREAS, original, live music and a narrative frame the acts, bringing animals and people together in a unique celebration of life. By integrating classic traditions of the circus with theater techniques, an ensemble cast and a storyline, Circus Flora produces mesmerizing shows that consistently deliver wonder and amazement to audience members of all ages; and

WHEREAS, the ensemble company mixes the best of world-class, family-based circus knowledge, passed down from generation to generation, with actors, dancers, musicians and animals, as well as performers from the new circus street and vaudeville movements. The artistry, magic and charm of Circus Flora’s performances have made it part of the vanguard of the “new circus” movement in North America; and

WHEREAS, adding to the distinctiveness and richness of the community, St. Louis is fortunate to be one of only three cities in the country with a circus of its very own. Each June, Circus Flora pitches the big red top tent on the Powell Symphony Hall parking lot to offer St. Louisans an amazing production of world-class performances; and

WHEREAS, year after year, Circus Flora’s momentum continues to grow. The 2010 season brought 29,500 fans to the big top. In 1997, Circus Flora’s big top tent was the first ever to be erected at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.; and in 2002, the tent was raised at The Lincoln Center Festival in New York City. Additionally, the Circus has made an unprecedented six appearances at the Spoleto Festival USA in Charleston, South Carolina.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Aldermen of the City of St. Louis that we pause in our deliberations to recognize the 25th Anniversary of Circus Flora 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 honorees at a time and place deemed appropriate by the Sponsor.

Introduced on the 3rd day of June, 2011 by:

Honorable Marlene Davis, Alderwoman 19th Ward

Adopted this the 3rd day of June, 2011 as attested by:

David W. Sweeney
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

Lewis E. Reed
President, Board of Aldermen