

Resolution Number 127
Celebrating the Many Contributions of Aaron Williams and the Success of The 7th Grade
Poetry Foundation

WHEREAS, Aaron Williams, a graduate of Washington University in St. Louis, recognized for his own poetry writing and passionate belief that, “Anyone can write a great poem and everyone deserves that chance,” has donated his time and resources for the betterment of the St. Louis region for 39 years, residing in the City of St. Louis for more than 20 years; and

WHEREAS, through his civic benevolence and actions, since 2003, Aaron Williams championed and initiated poetry writing opportunities for tens of thousands of students by championing school-based writing programs in the St. Louis area and nationwide; and

WHEREAS, poetry is a revered form of literary art that brings joy to many residents of the City of St. Louis and the entire bi-state region; and

WHEREAS, Aaron Williams was recognized as an individual recipient of the 2005 Focus St. Louis “What’s Right With the Region” Award for creating and improving educational opportunities in the St. Louis area; and

WHEREAS, Aaron Williams is to be recognized for his own poetry writing, often influenced by the St. Louis area, including being named one of ten winning poets in the 2013 *Poetry in Motion* competition sponsored by Arts in Transit, and recognized for his poem, “Insight”; and

WHEREAS, in 2010, Mr. Williams founded The 7th Grade Poetry Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, now recognized for promoting St. Louis as a leader in initiating and offering educational literary arts opportunities for young writers and assisting educators to help their students create their best work; and

WHEREAS, The 7th Grade Poetry Foundation has established extensive collaborations with numerous area institutions and entities, enriching the lives of young writers of all abilities, backgrounds and circumstances in all types of schools, and enlightening readers around the world; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, The 7th Grade Poetry Foundation provided 8,100 students in 120 schools in 33 counties in 14 states the opportunity to write the poem of their choice for the Foundation’s fourth annual school-based poetry contest, inspiring 4,200 students to submit poems, uniting 84 Missouri and Illinois schools’ winners from 13 counties with students, educators, family and diverse members of the community for a filmed event at the Missouri History Museum on April 16th; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Williams is the chief editor of “*Poetry on Our Terms*,” a publication of The 7th Grade Poetry Foundation that has showcased for the past four years the diverse thoughts, feelings and emotions of young adolescents; and

WHEREAS, this book, a compilation of various types of poetry from the hearts and minds of America’s seventh graders, is the only poetry anthology of its kind and is generously donated to students, schools and libraries coast-to-coast; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Williams’ civic programming has resulted in 201 school winners in the City of St. Louis and a total of 330 students nationwide having their poems published and archived in the St. Louis Public Library and libraries across the country; and

WHEREAS, we recognize Aaron Williams as an Ambassador of Poetry in the City of St. Louis, inspiring young people to transform their lives through a rich relationship with poetry writing, shepherding and celebrating the works of area poets of all abilities and ages, and growing an audience to appreciate their craft, message and beauty; and

WHEREAS, as an Ambassador of Poetry, Mr. Williams has been and will continue to be instrumental in assisting this body in the establishment of the post of Poet Laureate for the City of St. Louis; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Aldermen of the City of St. Louis, we do hereby recognize, honor and celebrate Aaron Williams as a businessman, social entrepreneur and poet, and recognize the immeasurable success of The 7th Grade Poetry Foundation and their annual publication, *Poetry on Our Terms*. 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 of the end that it may be presented to at a time and place deemed appropriate by the Sponsor.

Introduced on the 19th day of September, 2014 by:

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

Honorable Sharon Tyus, Alderwoman 1st Ward
Honorable Dionne Flowers, Alderwoman 2nd Ward
Honorable Freeman Bosley, Sr., Alderman 3rd Ward
Honorable Samuel L. Moore, Alderman 4th Ward
Honorable Tammika Hubbard, Alderwoman 5th Ward
Honorable Christine Ingrassia, Alderwoman 6th Ward
Honorable Phyllis Young, Alderwoman 7th Ward
Honorable Stephen Conway, Alderman 8th Ward
Honorable Kenneth Ortmann, Alderman 9th Ward
Honorable Joseph Vollmer, Alderman 10th Ward
Honorable Thomas Albert Villa, Alderman 11th Ward

Adopted this the 19th day of September, 2014 as attested by:

Honorable Larry Arnowitz, Alderman 12th Ward
Honorable Beth Murphy, Alderwoman 13th Ward
Honorable Carol Howard, Alderwoman 14th Ward
Honorable Donna Baringer, Alderwoman 16th Ward
Honorable Joseph Roddy, Alderman 17th Ward
Honorable Terry Kennedy, Alderman 18th Ward
Honorable Marlene E. Davis, Alderwoman 19th Ward
Honorable Craig Schmid, Alderman 20th Ward
Honorable Antonio D. French, Alderman 21st Ward
Honorable Jeffrey L. Boyd, Alderman 22nd Ward
Honorable Joe Vaccaro, Alderman 23rd Ward
Honorable Scott Ogilvie, Alderman 24th Ward
Honorable Shane Cohn, Alderman 25th Ward
Honorable Frank Williamson, Alderman 26th Ward
Honorable Chris Carter, Alderman 27th Ward
Honorable Lyda Krewson, Alderwoman 28th Ward

David W. Sweeney
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

Lewis E. Reed
President, Board of Aldermen