

RESOLUTION NUMBER 208

Uan and Sue Nguyen, Bill Kent, Jr. and Mark Keoshkerian

WHEREAS, the CWEA Renaissance Award recognizes groups and individuals who have made a significant positive economic or social impact in the Central West End; and

WHEREAS, the 2013 Renaissance Award is given to Uan and Sue Nguyen, Bill Kent, Jr. and Mark Keoshkerian for their roles in the dramatic revitalization of the 4400-4500 blocks of Olive Street; and

WHEREAS, Uan and Sue Nguyen are developers of the Lister Building, the Taylor-Olive Building and the Eugene Field School Apartments. Before Bowood Farms, before Kennedy Park, and before the new Gaslight Square, Sue and Uan Nguyen began transforming the corner of Olive and Taylor, where there had been no significant capital infusion for over 30 years. The Lister Building Annex to the west of the corner had already collapsed, and the Lister Building on the corner “didn’t even have a roof”; and

WHEREAS, Sue and Uan Nguyen completely rebuilt and refurbished the critical corner Lister Building, just moments ahead of the wrecking ball. The Nguyens went on to acquire and renovate the former Field School into sought after loft apartments, and to renovate the Taylor Olive building into a successful mixed use project. The Nguyen’s Lister Building has been recognized by Landmark’s Association as a Most Enhanced building, and led the way in demonstrating the residential living opportunities on Olive. Without the Nguyens’ commitment, the neighborhood surely would have lost the Lister Building and quite possibly the other buildings as well; and

WHEREAS, Bill Kent, Jr. is the Executive Director of the Youth Learning Center at 4471 Olive Street. The Youth Learning Center (YLC) is founded on the belief that every child can be successful given the right opportunities and supportive environments. Minister Willie L. Kent, Sr., and Ray and Judy DeLuca Ford founded the organization in 2003 as Youth Technology and Education Center (YTEC); and

WHEREAS, under the leadership of Bill Kent Jr. and with a dedicated staff of certified teachers, graduate students and volunteers, The Youth Learning Center provides a unique academic and enrichment program dedicated to providing children from underserved communities, with access to high quality and engaging after school and summer programming. Their many successful students and their motto “We Challenge the Status Quo” explain it all. The opportunities they provide and their beautiful new building and well maintained landscape make them a great neighbor for the residents and businesses on Olive; and

WHEREAS, Mark Keoshkerian is developer of 4440, 4443, 4445, 4448 and 4449 Olive Street. Mark renovated four dilapidated and unlivable properties and built brand new townhomes to transform the 4400 block of Olive. 4440 and 4448 had been abandoned for decades, most developers had written them off as just too far gone Mark’s skill, talent and fortitude proved the other guys wrong; and

WHEREAS, Mark’s conviction that “if you build it (a quality product), they will come” proved successful. Next, Mark moved across the street to renovate two more buildings and build brand new modern style townhomes. These townhomes were the first new residential construction on that block in over 80 years. Landmarks Association recognized the renovation of The Shriners Hall building with its “Most Enhanced” award in 2011. Mark has demonstrated that the area was a viable market, not just for rental apartments but for Condo ownership as well.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Aldermen of the City of St. Louis, that we wish to recognize Uan and Sue Nguyen, Bill Kent, Jr. and Mark Keoshkerian on being awarded the 2013 Central West End Renaissance Award, and we wish them many more years of success; and we further direct the Clerk of this Board to spread a copy of this Resolution across the minutes of this proceeding and to prepare a commemorative copy for presentation to our honorees at a time and place deemed appropriate by the sponsor.

Introduced on the 11th day of January, 2013 by:

Honorable Lyda Krewson, Alderwoman 28th Ward

Adopted this the 11th day of January, 2013 as attested by:

David W. Sweeney
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

Lewis E. Reed
President, Board of Aldermen