

Resolution Number 223
Okley Clark

WHEREAS, we have been apprised that on January 26, 1918, Okley Clark was born in Thomasville, Arkansas, an all African American town that was destroyed by Klansmen; and

WHEREAS, Okley and his brothers and sisters were raised by several close relatives due to the untimely deaths of both parents from tuberculosis; in their homes he learned many valuable skills that would prepare him for his life journey; and

WHEREAS, as a young man he moved to Chicago, Illinois, where he began working as a tailor. It was here he met and married the late Bessie Scruggs and to this union three daughters were born, Merdean, Odessa, and Janice; and

WHEREAS, in 1941 Okley relocated his family to St. Louis, Missouri and began working with the Terminal Railroad as a messenger and freight car switcher; to this day he maintains a strong relationship with this group; and

WHEREAS, being young and energetic, intelligent and hardworking, Okley sought not only to improve his life, but the lives of others through remarkable service to the community, and the businesses he created to meet their needs including, Subway cleaners, a service station franchise, and Ringside Athletic Club, Inc., where many outstanding professional boxers trained such as Archie Moore, Louis Armstrong, and Fernita Cox.; and

WHEREAS, his Athletic Organization gave many aspiring young men the opportunity to train, become disciplined and begin to achieve higher goals. The Senior Talent Boxing Association exists today, and alongside the venue Okley developed a recording studio for local artists to record their music at the Ringside Studio; and

WHEREAS, the Clark Sodding Company was one of the first African American owned landscaping companies to receive contracts to landscape subdivisions, universities, highways, service stations, and other institutions in the metropolitan area; and

WHEREAS, Okley Clark is a resident of the 22nd Ward where he spends hours in his garden growing fresh vegetables for family and friends; he is an active member of Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church where he shares his experiences and his blessings and is an inspiration to others.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOVED by the Board of Aldermen of the City of St. Louis that we pause in our deliberations and join with family and friends to honor and wish Okley Clark a happy 99th birthday and we wish further wish him peace and continued good health and we 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 the family at a time and place deemed appropriate by the Sponsor.

Introduced this 4th day of February, 2015 by:

Honorable Jeffrey Boyd, Alderman 22nd Ward

Honorable Freeman Bosley, Sr. , Alderman 3rd Ward

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

Adopted this 4th day of February, 2015 as attested by

David W. Sweeney
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

Lewis E. Reed
President, Board of Aldermen