

RESOLUTION NUMBER 244

Wiley Price, Jr.

WHEREAS, on Sunday February 24, 2013, in observance of Black History Month and the 150th Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, the Charles Sumner High School Alumni Association will host their 10th Annual Membership Round-Up. The event will recognize and honor the achievements of some of the City of St. Louis' African American "Firsts in Their Field" in various political and social positions/roles of distinction; and

WHEREAS, Wiley Price, Jr. was a St. Louis native, raised on Aldine on the north side, a graduate of Sumner High School with additional schooling in accountancy, and a military veteran. Bernie Hayes says of Price's place in radio history, "He was something to be idolized by the Black community. On the air he was laid back, very sincere. Everybody liked him"; and

WHEREAS, Wiley Price, Jr. got his first radio job in 1944 at WTMV, then a local powerhouse station with studios in the Broadview Hotel in East St. Louis. He was 31 years old; and

WHEREAS, in the 1940s and '50s, a person could carve out a radio career by being a savvy self-promoter. Station owners were always interested if money could be made, so many announcers would buy their own time in hour-long blocks and then sell ads on their programs. Wiley Price III says, "My father could talk his way into anything"; and

WHEREAS, once Price had made his case to WTMV management, he was given a late night air slot. To his listeners, he became known as "Mrs. Price's Boy Wiley." His radio shows were a mixture of gospel and rhythm & blues music, with gospel artists often performing live in the studio. His on-air approach was smooth and intelligent; and

WHEREAS, Price moved on to work as a deejay on KXLW and KSTL, playing the same mix of music he'd become accustomed to on WTMV. He left the business when station owners insisted he start playing a new form of music that was being called "rock 'n' roll"; and

WHEREAS, the first African-American to have his own radio show in St. Louis suffered a stroke in 1961 and died at the age of 56 in 1969.

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 late Wiley Price, Jr. and we recognize his success, achievement and accomplishment 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 honoree at a time and place deemed appropriate by the Sponsor.

Introduced on the 8th day of February, 2013 by:

Honorable Samuel L. Moore, Alderman 4th Ward

Adopted this 8th day of February, 2013 as attested by:

David W. Sweeney
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

Lewis E. Reed
President, Board of Aldermen