

RESOLUTION NUMBER 339
Bishop Willie James Ellis Jr.

WHEREAS, we pause in our deliberations to note the untimely passing of longtime St. Louis leader, Bishop Willie James Ellis Jr.; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Willie James Ellis Jr. was born on July 14, 1937 in Clarksdale, Mississippi; the eldest of four children born to Mr. Willie Ellis, Sr. and Mrs. Modia Lee Ellis. His parents, sister-Linda and brother-Gregory all preceded him in death. He married his college sweetheart, Beverly Elaine Coleman and to this union two children were born, Pamela Ann and Rolanda Delphine Ellis. He attended Charles Sumner High School, Harris Teachers College, Missouri Baptist Bible College and has received his Doctor of Divinity Degree from Providence Baptist Theological Seminary, additionally he also has received Honorary Doctor of Divinity Degrees from University Bible Institute and Western Baptist Bible College; and

WHEREAS, he displayed signs of Ministry at the age of three. He professed his love for the Christ and was baptized by Rev. Victor Wells at Westside Baptist Church. Later he joined Hopewell Missionary Baptist Church, under the leadership of Rev. W.S. Jones, where he served as minister of music. At the age of 21, he was called to the Ministry; on Easter Sunday, April 27, 1962, and was later ordained. In 1963, he was called to Pastor the Central Baptist Church of Wentzville. On January 13, 1964, he was called to pastor New Northside Baptist Church. Rev. Willie James Ellis Jr. led the congregation to greater heights spiritually, physically and financially. He made several noteworthy accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Ellis received numerous accolades for his involvement in the community. In 1982, he served as Chairman of the Task Force that helped resolve the teachers strike. In July 1983, he received the Outstanding Contributor of the Humanity and Welfare of Community to Improve Human Relations Civil Rights Award. In July 1985, the Mayor of Compton, California presented him with a citation for his commitment to civic and community work. Also to 1985, Bishop Ellis chaired the ministers' Task Force to win approval of a tax increase to improve, renovate, remodel and repair schools in the City of St. Louis. In June 1988, he returned to his alma mater, Charles Sumner High School, to serve as the commencement speaker for the graduating class. He has continued to work actively with the St. Louis Public School System throughout the years. In 1993, he served as Co-Chairman of the Tax Roll-Back Committee and the same year he was also selected as the community leader to meet with the candidates for the position of Superintendent of the City of St. Louis Public Schools. In 1994, the late Governor Mel Caranhan and the Honorable Freeman R. Bosley, Jr., presented him with proclamations designating June 3, 1994 as "Rev. Dr. Willie J. Ellis Jr. Day." Bishop Ellis serves as a Board Member of the Commissioners, and Commissioner for the Missouri State Public Defenders Office. On October 8, 2001 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, at a meeting of the United Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, Bishop Ellis was created a Grand Inspector General of the 33rd Degree. In June 2001, Rev. Ellis became the first consecrated Bishop of the Philadelphia Assemblies of Full Gospel Churches (PAFGC) in the Midwest. The PAFGC operated in 50 states and internationally. He served as regional Bishop for five states. In June 2002, he chaired the National Baptist Congress of Christian Education Pre-Musical 1,000 Voice Choir that was held in St. Louis, Missouri. Bishop Ellis was President and Chief Executive Officer of the New Northside Family Life Center, Conference Center and Child Development Center; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Ellis was known throughout the St. Louis area as well as nationwide for his civic leadership and community work. Many have described him as "A Man with a Vision". His belief in the institution of family and being a father caused him to envision the Child Development Center. His vision of the Child Development Center was two fold: 1) Parents needed credible community child development center; and 2) for many it would eliminate transporting the children to an unfamiliar environment. In November 1990, the New Northside Child Development Center was opened. The New Northside Child Development Center provides the children who attend (ages 6 weeks through 13 years) with a Christian, educational and family atmosphere, and is accredited by the Missouri Accreditation of Childhood Care and Education Program; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Ellis had many favorites. His favorite saying was, "Let the work I've done speak for me." His favorite songs were "The Lord Will Make Away Somehow", "I Won't Complain", and "My Soul's Been Anchored." Those that visited Bishop knew that his last words to them were "Amen." The Lord prepared our family with the words, "God has Spoken, let the Church say Amen."

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Aldermen of the City of St. Louis that we pause to remember the many contributions of Bishop Willie James Ellis Jr. to the citizens of the City of St. Louis and we join

with his many friends in expressing our sorrow at his passing, 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 memorial copy for presentation to the Ellis family, at a time and place deemed appropriate by the Sponsor.

Introduced on the 23rd day of March, 2012 by:

Honorable Gregory J. Carter, Alderman 27th Ward
Honorable Lewis E. Reed, President of the Board of Aldermen

Adopted this the 23rd day of March, 2012 as attested by:

David W. Sweeney
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

Lewis E. Reed
President, Board of Aldermen