

RESOLUTION NUMBER 25

Tyler Perry

WHEREAS, Tyler Perry's inspirational journey from the hard streets of New Orleans to the heights of Hollywood's A-list is the stuff of American legend. Born into poverty and raised in a household scarred by abuse, Tyler fought from a young age to find the strength, faith and perseverance that would later form the foundations of his much-acclaimed plays, films, books and shows; and

WHEREAS, it was a simple piece of advice from Oprah Winfrey that set Tyler's career in motion. Encouraged to keep a diary of his daily thoughts and experiences, Tyler began writing a series of soul-searching letters to himself-letters full of pain, forgiveness, and, in time, a healing catharsis. The letters inspired a musical, *I Know I've Been Changed*, and in 1992 Tyler gathered his life's savings and set off for Atlanta in hopes of staging it for sold out crowds. He spent all the money but the people never came, and Tyler once again came face to face with the poverty that had plagued his youth. He spent months sleeping in seedy motels and his car but his faith-in God and, in turn, himself-only got stronger. He forged a powerful relationship with the church, and he kept writing. In 1998 his perseverance paid off and a promoter *I Know I've Been Changed* for a limited run at a local church-turned-theatre. This time the community came out in droves, and soon the musical moved to Atlanta's prestigious Fox Theatre. Tyler Perry never looked back; and

WHEREAS, *I Know I've Been Changed* was a poignant story of failure and redemption, and it resounded with urban audiences who identified with its themes and exalted in its spirit. In Tyler they'd found a voice for their longings, and an outlet for their entertainment, and so began an incredible run of eight plays in as many years, including *Woman Thou Art Loosed!*, a celebrated collaboration with the prominent Dallas pastor T.D. Jakes; and

WHEREAS, but if audiences were buoyed by Tyler's faith, they were bowled over by his humor. No way around it: the man was plain funny. Nowhere was this more in evidence than in 2000's *I Can Do Bad All By Myself*, which marked the first appearance of the now-legendary Madea. A God-fearing, gun-toting, pot-smoking, loud-mouthed grandmother, Madea was played by Perry himself. Madea was such a resounding success, she soon spawned a series of plays- *Madea's Family Reunion* (2002), *Madea's Class Reunion* (2003) and *Madea Goes to Jail* (2005) and set the stage for Tyler's jump to the big screen; and

WHEREAS, in early 2005, Tyler's first feature film, *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*, debuted at #1 nationwide. By the end of its first weekend in theatres, two things had happened: the film had earned \$22 million, and Tyler Perry-writer, actor, and producer-had become a superstar. Tyler's ensuing films, *Madea's Family Reunion*, *Daddy Little Girls*, *Why Did I Get Married?*, *Meet the Browns*, and *The Family that Preys* have all met with massive critical and commercial success, delighting audiences across America and around the world. His most recent film, *Madea Goes to Jail*, spent two weeks at the top of the box office and ultimately went on to gross more than \$90 million; and

WHEREAS, 2006 saw the publication of Tyler's first book, *Don't Make a Black Woman Take Off Her Earrings: Madea's Uninhibited Commentaries on Life and Love*, which shot to the top of the New York Times nonfiction bestseller list and remained there for eight weeks. It went on to claim Quill Book Awards for both "Humor" and "Book of the Year" (an unheard-of feat for a first-time author), and spread Tyler Perry's unique brand of inspirational entertainment to a devoted new audience; and

WHEREAS, it is a brand that is quickly becoming an empire. In 2007, Tyler expanded his reach to television with the TBS series *Tyler Perry's House of Payne*, the highest-rated first-run syndicated cable show of all time, which went into syndication after only a year. His follow up effort, *Meet the Browns*, was the second highest debut ever on cable - after House of Payne - and was picked up for 80 episodes to begin airing this summer. Not one to rest on success, Tyler Perry and his 300 Atlanta-based employees are hard at work on new projects including *I Can Do Bad All By Myself* starring Academy Award nominee Taraji Henson and Mary J. Blige, currently in production; *Why Did I Get Married Too*, which will go into production this summer. He helped release *Precious: Based On The Novel By Sapphire*, in conjunction with his 34th Street Films banner, Oprah Winfrey's Harpo Films and Lionsgate. The film was also the recipient of three prestigious awards at the festival: Grand Jury Prize: U.S Dramatic, Audience Award and a Special Jury Award for Acting; and

WHEREAS, in the fall of 2008, Perry also opened his 200,000 square foot studios in Atlanta situated on

the former Delta Airlines campus on more than 30 acres. Employing hundreds of local Atlantans, his new studio consists of 5 sound stages, a post production facility, a pond, a back lot, a 400 seat theater and private screening room and designated areas for entertaining and holding events.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Aldermen of the City of St. Louis that we pause in our deliberations to recognize Tyler Perry and we wish him continued 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 23rd day of April, 2010 by:

Honorable Marlene Davis, Alderman 19th Ward

Adopted this the 23rd day of April, 2010 as attested by:

David W. Sweeney
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

Lewis E. Reed
President, Board of Aldermen