

RESOLUTION NUMBER 119
Lt. Col. William H. Holloman III

WHEREAS, we pause in our deliberations to note the untimely passing of Lt. Col. William H. Holloman III; and

WHEREAS, William Holloman, a Tuskegee Airman, didn't stop serving his country when his active duty as one of the United States' first African-American combat pilots ended after World War II. He was called back to service in the Korean War and became the Air Force's first black helicopter pilot. He went to war again in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, during the nearly four decades after he retired from the Army, he served his country in a different way: by teaching younger generations how war and aviation intersected in a way that helped end centuries of racial separation; and

WHEREAS, a St. Louis native who as a teenager was so crazy about flying he would walk two miles to an airport to watch the planes, he volunteered for an all-black aviation-training program at Tuskegee Army Air Field in Alabama. Because some Army generals were dubious about the ability of African Americans to maintain and fly aircraft, the Tuskegee Airmen were required to undergo twice as much training as their white counterparts; and

WHEREAS, one of 450 trainees sent to North Africa and Italy, Lt. Col. Holloman flew a single-seat P-51 Mustang fighter-bomber from a base in Italy to targets in Germany, Austria and Eastern European countries. He flew 19 combat missions, including escorting bombers and hitting enemy targets; and

WHEREAS, stationed at bases segregated by race, the black fighter pilots and the white bomber crews mingled in towns where whites insisted on buying drinks for their fighter escorts. When Lt. Col. Holloman sailed back to the States, he walked down a gangplank in New York and saw signs that read, "Whites to the right, coloreds to the left;" and

WHEREAS, after World War II, Lt. Col. Holloman did stints dusting crops in South America and flying small commercial planes in Canada. An Air Force reservist, he was called back to active duty during the Korean War and in Vietnam, where he switched to the Army. He retired in 1972; and

WHEREAS, a founding member and first president of the Sam Bruce Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen Inc., Lt. Col. Holloman took the Tuskegee story to virtually anyone who would listen. Lt. Col. Holloman annually hosted panels at the Museum of Flight, spoke to young people about history and aviation, and traveled the country sharing his story. His calendar was booked for the next two years with speeches, aircraft fly-ins and other events, daughter Lesley Holloman said. "He never slowed down. ... He loved that people wanted to hear what he had to say about history," she said; and

WHEREAS, Lt. Col. Holloman's World War II flight jacket is on display at the Northwest African American Museum in Seattle. He attended the museum's opening in 2008, standing by the jacket and telling the Tuskegee Airmen story to the 3,000 visitors, said the museum's executive director, Barbara Earl Thomas; and

WHEREAS, He is survived by his wife, Artie Adele Holloman, of Kent, Washington; sons William IV and Michael Holloman, both of Seattle, and Christopher, of Bellevue; daughters Lesley Holloman, of St. Louis, Robyn Holloman, of Seattle and Maria Holloman-Toye, of Rochester, Thurston County; and five grandchildren.

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 Lt. Col. William H. Holloman III 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 Holloman family, at a time and place deemed appropriate by the Sponsor.

Introduced on the 18th day of June, 2010 by:

Honorable Samuel L. Moore Alderman 4th Ward

Adopted this the 18th day of June, 2010 as attested by:

David W. Sweeney
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

Lewis E. Reed
President, Board of Aldermen

