

RESOLUTION NUMBER 129

Percy James, Jr.

WHEREAS, we pause in our deliberations to note the untimely passing of native St. Louisan, Percy James, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, Mr. James was captain of an undefeated high school football team for two years. He attended Tennessee State, Lincoln University, and Morning Side in Sioux City, Iowa under four scholarships; and

WHEREAS, while in school, Mr. James discovered and developed another talent, Bongo and Congo drums. At Tennessee State, he was influenced by the music department, not knowing that it would be his life work and endeavor. Percy was the founder of the quartet "Tres Bien." Some of his exciting work has been exhibited around the world. Mr. James was an international artist who has shared the headlines with many of the stars today; and

WHEREAS, Mr. James appeared on recordings with such groups as the Tres Bien Quartet, (12 albums), Jimmy Night Train Forrest (2 albums) and Oliver Nelson (2 albums). Mr. James was a Down Beat poll winner in the Sixties. He headlined with such greats as Dizzy Gillespie and James Moody at the Apollo Theatre and Sara Vaughn at Powell Hall in St. Louis; and

WHEREAS, Mr. James performed with Nancy Wilson, Count Basie, headlining with Lou Rawls and Dionne Warwick on the Sammy Davis Jr. Variety Show in St. Louis for fifteen years. He appeared with "Tres Bien" on the nationally aired Channel 4 TV special "Jazz Comes Calling," and was also featured in the film "Route 66" which was staged in Gaslight Square. He headlined with Thelonius Monk during a live recording in Los Angeles at the "It Club." He also headlined, with "Tres Bien," with Sonny Stitt and the Ahmad Jamal Trio. Additionally, he headlined with Grant Green, Johnny Watson, Ray Charles, Bill Henderson, Dick Gregory, Redd Foxx, Nina Simone, Dorothy Ashby and Horace Silver; and

WHEREAS, Mr. James was voted "Outstanding Jazz Conga/Bongo Performer" in college pools. He is featured in the Jazz Encyclopedia of the '60s by Leonard Feathers and in "Who's Who in America." His last appearance was in Just Jazz in Atlanta, Georgia in 1993.

WHEREAS, Percy James, Jr.'s memories will be cherished by : his loving wife, Deanette James; his children, Sheryl Hayes, Van Elgin Scott, Esq., Kareem James and Bruce Young; grandchildren, Demetrius James, Demetrius James II, Dorien James, Jada James, Dade James, Gabrielle Edwards, Tiffany Aldridge, Melvin Jr., Melany, Melvin 3rd, Charles(Monicka), MiKayla, Charles 3rd, Cheyanne, Iylas, Masico, Kenya Young, Kailyn Young, Keyon Harris, Ebony Whittier, Larnie Johnson 3rd, Jeremiah Johnson, Dred Scott and Taylor Scott; and a host of other family and friends.

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 Percy James, 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 James family, at a time and place deemed appropriate by the Sponsor.

Introduced on the 8th day of September, 2009 by:

Honorable April Ford-Griffin, Alderwoman 5th Ward

Adopted this the 8th day of September, 2009 as attested by:

David W. Sweeney
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

Lewis E. Reed
President, Board of Aldermen