

Resolution No. 131
Congressman John Lewis

WHEREAS, John Lewis was born the son of sharecroppers on February 21, 1940, outside of Troy, Alabama. On that day a great leader in the struggle of civil rights was born; and

WHEREAS, as a child, he was inspired by the activism surrounding the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the words of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., which he heard on radio broadcasts. In those pivotal moments, he made a decision to become a part of the Civil Rights Movement; and

WHEREAS, while a student at Fisk University, John Lewis organized sit-in demonstrations at segregated lunch counters in Nashville, Tennessee and he volunteered to participate in the Freedom Rides, which challenged segregation at interstate bus terminals across the South, risking his life and also being beaten severely by angry mobs and arrested by police for challenging the injustice of Jim Crow segregation in the South. Mr. Lewis was also named Chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC); and

WHEREAS, by 1963, Mr. Lewis was dubbed one of the Big Six Leaders of the Civil Rights Movement. (along with Whitney Young, A. Phillip Randolph, Martin Luther King Jr., James Farmer and Roy Wilkins). At the youthful age of 23, he was an architect of and a keynote speaker at the historic March on Washington in August 1963; and

WHEREAS, Congressman Lewis coordinated SNCC efforts to organize voter registration drives and community action programs during the Mississippi Freedom Summer and the following year helped lead over 600 peaceful, orderly protestors across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama on March 7, 1965. The marchers were attacked by Alabama state troopers in a brutal confrontation that became known as "Bloody Sunday" and news broadcasts and photographs revealing this senseless cruelty of the segregated South helped hasten the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965; and

WHEREAS, despite the arrests and attacks, John Lewis remained a devoted advocate of the philosophy of nonviolence. After leaving SNCC in 1966, he held positions such as Associate Director of the Field, Director of the Voter Education Project (VEP). Under his leadership, the VEP transformed the nation's political climate by adding nearly four million minorities to the voter rolls. In 1977, John Lewis was appointed by President Jimmy Carter to direct more than 250,000 volunteers of ACTION, the federal volunteer agency. In 1981, he was elected to the Atlanta City Council. He was elected to Congress in November 1986 and has served as U.S. Representative of Georgia's Fifth Congressional District since then; and

WHEREAS, Congressman Lewis has received countless awards, including the only John F. Kennedy "Profile in Courage Award" for Lifetime Achievement that has ever granted by the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation. The Timberland Company has developed the John Lewis Award, which honors the Congressman's commitment to humanitarian service by acknowledging members of society who perform outstanding humanitarian work and the company has established a John Lewis Scholarship Fund; and

WHEREAS, John Lewis holds a B.A. in Religion and Philosophy from Fisk University, and he is a graduate of the American Baptist Theological Seminary, both in Nashville, Tennessee. He has been awarded over 50 honorary degrees from prestigious colleges and universities throughout the United States.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Aldermen of the City of St. Louis that we pause in our deliberations to recognize Congressman John Lewis and his contribution to America 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 25th day of June, 2010 by:

Honorable Terry Kennedy, Alderman 18th Ward
Honorable Lewis E. Reed, President of the Board of Aldermen
Honorable Charles Quincy Troupe, Alderman 1st Ward
Honorable Dionne Flowers, Alderwoman 2nd Ward
Honorable Freeman Bosley, Sr., Alderman 3rd Ward
Honorable Samuel L. Moore, Alderman 4th Ward
Honorable April Ford Griffin, Alderwoman 5th Ward
Honorable Kacie Starr Triplett, Alderwoman 6th Ward

Honorable Marlene E. Davis, Alderwoman 19th Ward
Honorable Antonio D. French, Alderman 21st Ward
Honorable Jeffrey L. Boyd, Alderman 22nd Ward
Honorable Frank Williamson, Alderman 26th Ward
Honorable Gregory J. Carter, Alderman 27th Ward

Adopted this the 25th day of June, 2010 as attested by:

David W. Sweeney
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

Lewis E. Reed
President, Board of Aldermen