

RESOLUTION NUMBER 210
Robbie Montgomery

WHEREAS, we have been apprised that on Thursday, October 23, 2008 at the Hyatt Hotel the Metro Sentinel Journal News will convene its 33rd Annual "Yes I Can" awards banquet; and

WHEREAS, under the leadership of Michael C. Williams, owner and publisher, the Metro Sentinel Journal News continues to recognize the meaningful contributions of stellar St. Louisans; and

WHEREAS, local leaders have been nominated by their peers and admirers as "Special Achievers" in 2008; and

WHEREAS, these local leaders have established themselves as outstanding professionals in the public, private, non-profit, government and educational sectors; and

WHEREAS, Robbie Montgomery grew up the oldest of nine children in a Mississippi family that moved to St. Louis when she was a child. Money wasn't plentiful, but the family always ate well. Montgomery's mother fed her family three home-cooked meals a day; and

WHEREAS, after years of singing in church and talent shows, Montgomery dropped out in the 11th grade in 1958 to sing professionally. She soon was singing as an "Artette" with Art Lassiter, who was supposed to collaborate on a song with Ike Turner. When Lassiter and Turner had a falling out, Ike went ahead with the project anyway, putting the then unknown Anna Mae Bullock on lead vocals and Montgomery among those on backup. Bullock, whom Montgomery calls Little Ann, went on to become Tina Turner; and

WHEREAS, after Montgomery gave birth to her first child, Montgomery joined Ike and Tina Turner on the road in 1961 as an Ikette. By the late 1960s, Montgomery stopped touring with the Turners. The Ikettes had a hit record of their own, but had to stop using the name, which was owned by Ike Turner; and

WHEREAS, Montgomery, who had moved to California, toured as a "Night Tripper" with Dr. John - of "Right Place, Wrong Time" fame - and worked as a session singer, recording with Stevie Wonder, Barbra Streisand, The Rolling Stones and Joe Cocker. During the late 1970s, she opened the short-lived Wings and Things, a chicken wing restaurant in Pomona, Calif., and continued singing until a lung condition failed to heal properly, ending her career in 1979; and

WHEREAS, Montgomery returned to St. Louis and trained as a dialysis technician. One of her patients was Leon Strauss; he and his wife, Mary, were well-known for their involvement with the arts in the city, including restoring the opulent Fox Theatre. Leon Strauss died in 1999, but the couple supported Montgomery's hope to open a restaurant. "We just thought it would be a really nice thing to help someone with their dream," Mary Strauss recalled. "She's a survivor, and she's got this great frame of mind." Montgomery recalled formidable obstacles. She'd save money when she could, buying equipment slowly at rummage sales or trading musical equipment for it. But the struggle paid off when she was able to open her first Sweetie Pie's. Two years ago, Montgomery opened her second restaurant - Sweetie Pie's at the Mangrove in South St. Louis.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Aldermen for the City of St. Louis that we pause in our deliberations to recognize Robbie Montgomery for her stellar accomplishments and commitment to making our region a better place to live and work. We direct the Clerk of this Board to prepare a commemorative copy of this resolution to the end that it may be presented to our honoree at a time and place deemed appropriate by the sponsor.

Introduced on the 24th day of October, 2007

Honorable April Ford-Griffin, Alderwoman 5th Ward

Adopted this the 24th day of October, 2007 as attested:

David W. Sweeney
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

Lewis E. Reed
President, Board of Aldermen