

RESOLUTION NUMBER 340

WHEREAS, this honorable Board of Aldermen of the City of St. Louis has been apprised of the more than 35 years of the faithful and dedicated service of Ms. Safiyah Chauvin to the cultural and artistic education and development of youth in the St. Louis community; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Chauvin, affectionately known by many as “Mama Safiyah,” has sponsored the African Heritage Dancers and Drummers Youth Group since its official beginnings in 1973, thus making 2008 thirty-five years of existence for the dance troupe; and

WHEREAS, after traveling to five West African and five East African countries; dancing with the national dance companies of both Ghana and Ethiopia, Mama Safiyah used that extensive knowledge to teach positive self concepts to African – American youth through dance, drumming, song and music as a way to defuse negative stereotypes about Africa and her descendents propagated by the media and other factions in America: and

WHEREAS, Mama Safiyah, a teacher by trade, certainly learned the meaning of dance discipline through the hours and hours of rigorous movement training with the national dance companies of Ghana and Ethiopia but also learned it with teachers of the Katherine Dunham Dance Company with whom she studied with in East St. Louis, Illinois; and

WHEREAS, since the beginning of the African Heritage Dancers and Drummers, Mama Safiyah has inculcated three generations of youth in the St. Louis community with cultural and individual pride, self esteem, cultural awareness, character development, tenacity, leadership skills, public speaking and community service; and

WHEREAS, many of the youth trained by Mama Safiyah have grown to become pillars in the St. Louis community and throughout the country as teachers, attorneys, community organizers, active voters, professional dancers and musicians, as well as, parents and grandparents bringing their children back to Mama Safiyah to the critical and vital cultural training that helped them; and

WHEREAS, youth with the African Heritage Dance Company have had the experience of traveling throughout the United States performing traditional African Dance and teaching the richness and beauty of African heritage and culture; and

WHEREAS, Mama Safiyah continues to provide these services for free to youth and their families meeting weekly at the Westend Community Center making her an icon, a shining star and a pillar of the St. Louis community.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Aldermen of the City of St. Louis that we pause in our deliberations to recognize the over 35 years of dedicated service to the cultural enrichment of St. Louis, the education of our youth and the ending of racial stereotypes which is vital work to the St. Louis community and by adoption of this resolution wishes to thank and congratulate her on her great work toward cultural understanding and diversity 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 for presentation to the honoree at a time and place deemed appropriate by the Sponsor.

Introduced on the 22nd day of February, 2008 by:

Honorable Terry Kennedy, Alderman 18th Ward
Honorable Charles Quincy Troupe, Alderman 1st Ward
Honorable Dionne Flowers, Alderwoman 2nd Ward
Honorable Freeman Bosley, 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 Davis, Alderwoman 19th Ward
Honorable Bennice Jones King, Alderwoman 21st Ward
Honorable Jeffrey Boyd, Alderman, 22nd Ward
Honorable Frank Williamson, Alderman 26th Ward

Honorable Gregory Carter, Alderman 27th Ward

Adopted this the 22nd day of February, 2008