

RESOLUTION NUMBER 173

Lieutenant Colonel Charles A. Lane, Jr.

WHEREAS, Lieutenant Colonel Charles A. Lane, Jr. was born on June 2, 1925 in St. Louis to the late Charles A. Lane, Sr. and Verna Lane. Charles developed a love for aviation at a young age. As a young boy, he loved to build airplanes out of paper and wood, and pedaled his bike some eighteen miles each way to watch planes fly over Lambert Field; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from Sumner High School, Charles attended Harriett Beecher Stowe Teachers College in St. Louis, Missouri. In 1943, his studies were interrupted when he volunteered for the Air Corps Advanced Flying School at Tuskegee Filed as a fighter pilot. That same year, he joined the Army Air Corps 99th Pursuit Squadron in Italy; and

WHEREAS, Lane was only nineteen years old when he first piloted a P-51 Mustang in combat. He was the youngest African American aviator in World War II. Over the next year, Lane flew twenty-six missions, escorting B-17 Flying Fortresses and B-24 Liberator Bombers. Such missions required him to go head-to-head with German fighter pilots, and took him deep into enemy territory. Lane's exemplary service as an original Tuskegee Airmen lead to the integration of the United States military; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Lane also served in the Korean War and the Vietnam War. He flew fighter planes, fighter jets, transport planes, and B-52 Stratofortresses. His last tour of duty was at Strategic Air Command at Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska. In 1970, Colonel Lane retired from the United States Air Force as a Lieutenant Colonel after twenty-seven years of service; and

WHEREAS, following his retirement, Colonel Lane served as the Executive Director of Greater Omaha Community Action ("G.O.C.A"). Over the next twenty-two years, he provided much needed services to the youth, disabled, and elderly. He also developed and managed programs dedicated to addressing the issues of poverty, alcoholism, homelessness, and mental health; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Lane was an active member of the Alphonza W. Davis Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. He was also a lifetime member of the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., and served on the organization's national board. Colonel Lane enjoyed sharing his experiences as an original Tuskagee Airman with the community, and educating others about the historical contributions of the Tuskegee Airmen, otherwise known as "World War II's best kept secret." ; and

WHEREAS, in 1990, Colonel Lane founded the 99th Pursuit Cadet Squadron of the Nebraska Wing of the Civil air Patrol, the official auxiliary of the United States Air Force. As the Squadron's first Commander, and later its Commander Emeritus, he mentored countless youth and promoted aviation throughout Nebraska; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Lane was the recipient of numerous awards and acknowledgments. In 2003, he was inducted into the Nebraska Aviation Hall of Fame. In 2006, he received an Honorary Doctor in Public Service from the Tuskegee University. In 2007, President George W. Bush presented Colonel Lane with a Congressional Gold Medal. However, he considered his family to be his most important accomplishment; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Lane was preceded in death by his wife Betty Jean Lane; sons Charles A. Lane, III and Mark S. Lane; sisters Alice Wilson, Evelyn (Levert) Williams, Henrene "Boo" (Robert) Hubbard; brothers George (Marion) Lane, Sr., Frank (Anita) Lane, Sr., Henry (Vonceil) Lane; and beloved companion Ruth Louise Borders; and

WHEREAS, he is survived by daughter Karen (George) Davis of Omaha, NE; sisters Mary (Harry) Crawford of Richmond, VA, Clara (Charles) Brown of St. Louis, Verna (Ocie) Haynes of St. Louis, Muriel (Oscar) Pulliam of Omaha, and Rose (John) Davis of St. Louis; brother William Lane of St. Louis; grandchildren Danielle Davis of Baton Rouge, LA, George Davis V of Washington, DC, Geoffrey Davis of Los Angeles, CA, Grant Davis of Omaha, NE, Nicholas Manning of Thornton, CO, Anthony Lane of Thornton, CO, Deslie Ervin of Lincoln, NE, Jasmine (Robert) Mohr of Fredericksburg, VA, and Charles "Chaz" Lane of Des Moines, IA; great grandchildren Kasiya Ervin, Dahlia Mohr, and Braylon Persutte-Manning; and a host of nieces, nephews, 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 Lieutenant Colonel Charles A. Lane, 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 Lane family, at a time and place deemed appropriate by the Sponsor.

Introduced on the 22nd day of November, 2013 by:

Honorable Samuel L. Moore Alderman 4th Ward

Adopted this the 22nd day of November, 2013 as attested by:

David W. Sweeney
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

Lewis E. Reed
President, Board of Aldermen