

**Resolution Number 127**  
**Celebrating the Many Contributions of Aaron Williams and the Success of The 7th Grade Poetry Foundation**

**WHEREAS**, Aaron Williams, a graduate of Washington University in St. Louis, recognized for his own poetry writing and passionate belief that, “Anyone can write a great poem and everyone deserves that chance,” has donated his time and resources for the betterment of the St. Louis region for 39 years, residing in the City of St. Louis for more than 20 years; and

**WHEREAS**, through his civic benevolence and actions, since 2003, Aaron Williams championed and initiated poetry writing opportunities for tens of thousands of students by championing school-based writing programs in the St. Louis area and nationwide; and

**WHEREAS**, poetry is a revered form of literary art that brings joy to many residents of the City of St. Louis and the entire bi-state region; and

**WHEREAS**, Aaron Williams was recognized as an individual recipient of the 2005 Focus St. Louis “What’s Right With the Region” Award for creating and improving educational opportunities in the St. Louis area; and

**WHEREAS**, Aaron Williams is to be recognized for his own poetry writing, often influenced by the

St. Louis area, including being named one of ten winning poets in the 2013 Poetry in Motion competition sponsored by Arts in Transit, and recognized for his poem, “Insight”; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2010, Mr. Williams founded The 7th Grade Poetry Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, now recognized for promoting St. Louis as a leader in initiating and offering educational literary arts opportunities for young writers and assisting educators to help their students create their best work; and

**WHEREAS**, The 7th Grade Poetry Foundation has established extensive collaborations with numerous area institutions and entities, enriching the lives of young writers of all abilities, backgrounds and circumstances in all types of schools, and enlightening readers around the world; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2014, The 7th Grade Poetry Foundation provided 8,100 students in 120 schools in 33 counties in 14 states the opportunity to write the poem of their choice for the Foundation’s fourth annual school-based poetry contest, inspiring 4,200 students to submit poems, uniting 84 Missouri and Illinois schools’ winners from 13 counties with students, educators, family and diverse members of the community for a filmed event at the Missouri History Museum on April 16th; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Williams is the chief editor of “Poetry on Our Terms,” a publication of The 7th Grade Poetry Foundation that has showcased for the past four years the diverse thoughts, feelings and emotions of young adolescents; and

**WHEREAS**, this book, a compilation of various types of poetry from the hearts and minds of America’s seventh graders, is the only poetry anthology of its kind and is generously donated to students, schools and libraries coast-to-coast; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Williams’ civic programming has resulted in 201 school winners in the City of St. Louis and a total of 330 students nationwide having their poems published and archived in the St. Louis Public Library and libraries across the country; and

**WHEREAS**, we recognize Aaron Williams as an Ambassador of Poetry in the City of St. Louis, inspiring young people to transform their lives through a rich relationship with poetry writing, shepherding and celebrating the works of area poets of all abilities and ages, and growing an audience to appreciate their craft, message and beauty; and

**WHEREAS**, as an Ambassador of Poetry, Mr. Williams has been and will continue to be instrumental in assisting this body in the establishment of the post of Poet Laureate for the City of St. Louis; and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Aldermen of the City of St. Louis, we do hereby recognize, honor and celebrate Aaron Williams as a businessman, social entrepreneur and poet, and recognize the immeasurable success of The 7th Grade Poetry Foundation and their annual publication, Poetry on Our Terms. 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 of the end that it may be presented to at a time and place deemed appropriate by the Sponsor.

Introduced on the 19<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2014 by:

**Honorable Lewis E. Reed, President of the Board of Aldermen**

Honorable Sharon Tyus, Alderwoman 1<sup>st</sup> Ward  
Honorable Dionne Flowers, Alderwoman 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward  
Honorable Freeman Bosley, Sr., Alderman 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward  
Honorable Samuel L. Moore, Alderman 4<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Tammika Hubbard, Alderwoman 5<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Christine Ingrassia, Alderwoman 6<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Phyllis Young, Alderwoman 7<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Stephen Conway, Alderman 8<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Kenneth Ortmann, Alderman 9<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Joseph Vollmer, Alderman 10<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Thomas Albert Villa, Alderman 11<sup>th</sup> Ward

Adopted this the 19<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2014 as attested by:

Honorable Larry Arnowitz, Alderman 12<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Beth Murphy, Alderwoman 13<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Carol Howard, Alderwoman 14<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Donna Baringer, Alderwoman 16<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Joseph Roddy, Alderman 17<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Terry Kennedy, Alderman 18<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Marlene E. Davis, Alderwoman 19<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Craig Schmid, Alderman 20<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Antonio D. French, Alderman 21<sup>st</sup> Ward  
Honorable Jeffrey L. Boyd, Alderman 22<sup>nd</sup> Ward  
Honorable Joe Vaccaro, Alderman 23<sup>rd</sup> Ward  
Honorable Scott Ogilvie, Alderman 24<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Shane Cohn, Alderman 25<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Frank Williamson, Alderman 26<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Chris Carter, Alderman 27<sup>th</sup> Ward  
Honorable Lyda Krewson, Alderwoman 28<sup>th</sup> Ward

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David W. Sweeney  
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

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Lewis E. Reed  
President, Board of Aldermen