

RESOLUTION NO. 170483

Declaring July 1, 2017, as Lucile Bluford Day in Kansas City, Missouri.

WHEREAS, Lucile Bluford, reporter, publisher and editor of The Kansas City CALL since 1932, died June 13, 2003, three weeks short of her ninety-second birthday; and

WHEREAS, in addition to being a journalist and publisher, Lucile Bluford was a leader of the civil rights movement in Kansas City; and

WHEREAS, a 1932 graduate of The University of Kansas, Ms. Bluford was denied enrollment in graduate school at the University of Missouri, a denial she challenged in court. In order to forestall and avoid her admission, MU stopped its graduate journalism program for a time. Later, in an act of contrition and recognition of her work, Ms. Bluford was awarded the Missouri Honor Medal for Distinguished Service in Journalism (1984) and an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree (1989); and

WHEREAS, Lucile Bluford was a tenacious champion of equal rights, and was a leader in the movement to end racial segregation in Kansas City's stores and restaurants. She encouraged a boycott of downtown department stores in 1958-1959, and covered the City's public accommodations referendum in 1964 as well as the riots after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968. She was always an outspoken voice for racial equality; and

WHEREAS, among the many awards Ms. Bluford received was recognition as the Greater Kansas City Woman of the Year for 2002, honored by the Kansas City Public Library in 1988 when the library branch at Prospect and 31st Street was named for her, honored at the Newseum in Washington, DC, and is part of the Washington Press Club Foundation's Women in Journalism Oral History Project; and

WHEREAS, Representative Brandon Ellington co-sponsored a bill one year ago to make Lucile Bluford Day a statewide observance and will speak at a ceremony on July 1 with special exhibits highlighting Bluford's life and career; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF KANSAS CITY:

That the Mayor and Council hereby declare July 1, 2017, as Lucile Bluford Day in Kansas City, Missouri; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution be spread upon the Minutes of the Council in testimony thereof and that a copy hereof be presented to Grace Bentley, Branch Manager of the Lucile H. Bluford branch, in token of the Mayor and Council's appreciation for her many contributions to our community.

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