

RESOLUTION NO. 170139

Honoring Dr. Howard Nelson, Jr. on the occasion of celebrating Black History Month for his contributions to the advancement of African Americans in Kansas City, Missouri.

WHEREAS, Dr. Nelson graduated from Dunbar High School in Washington, DC in 1939; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Nelson was drafted into the United States Army in 1940 and in 1943 he along with 12 black soldiers was selected to attend Officer Candidate School where he was 1 of 3 to finish. Dr. Nelson was then assigned to the 92 Infantry Division which was the only black division to see combat during WWII in Italy; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Nelson returned to Washington, DC and attended Howard University where he received his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology in 1947. Dr. Nelson decided he wanted to attend dental school and without ever taking any science classes, got accepted and graduated from Howard University Dental School in 1954; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Nelson moved to Kansas City Missouri in 1957 and opened his dental practice where he served our community for almost 45 years; and

WHEREAS, in 1964, Dr. Nelson became Chairman of the Kansas City Chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), an organization founded in 1942, the CORE became one of the leading activist organizations in the early years of the American Civil Rights Movement. In June 1964, Dr. Nelson led a group of CORE members to Parkway Bowling Club on Prospect Avenue; the group refused to leave the premises and was subsequently arrested and charged with disturbing the peace. This moment was memorialized on the front page of the Kansas City Times; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Nelson was a man of firsts, he was the first black to serve on the Board of Governors of the Dental Association in 1972 where he served two terms and in 1986, was appointed by the governor to the Missouri State Dental Board becoming the first black to serve and eventually becoming the body's first black President in 1991; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF KANSAS CITY:

That the Mayor and Council hereby extend to Dr. Howard Nelson, Jr., on the occasion of Black History Month, the heartiest best wishes for his acts of valor and distinction, together with their most sincere appreciation for his years of dedicated service to the citizens of the United States of American and to Kansas City; 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 Dr. Nelson, Jr., in token of the Mayor and Council's respect, high regard and admiration.

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