

RESOLUTION NO. 32 - 2022

RECOGNIZING and honoring C. Smith for his pioneering work in local and national photography, his community and civic leadership, and for his many contributions to the City of Cincinnati.

WHEREAS, for more than 60 years, Cincinnati photographer C. Smith has captured the African American community's public struggles and its private celebrations, and his passion for photography has been lifelong as he has worked hard from the age of 14 to perfect his craft, and C. has owned and operated his photography business for more than 60 years and established C. Smith Photography Studios, which is one of the most recognized photography studios in the tri-state area, that has been operating in the same location since 1983, and his photos have appeared in *Jet*, *Ebony*, *Black Enterprise*, and *Essence*; and

WHEREAS, since the beginning of his career in 1949 when he developed film in a darkroom at the famed Cotton Club in the West End, C. has become the most recognized African American photographer in Cincinnati, recording black celebrities, such as James Brown, Ray Charles, and Harry Belafonte when they visited the Queen City, and local heroes like the Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth, Oscar Robertson, and Ezzard Charles, and he has photographed the likes of U.S. presidents Barack Obama, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush and religious leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr., Desmond Tutu, and the Dalai Lama; and

WHEREAS, C. has captured the images of three U.S. Presidents and his photos are among the stills featured in the 2014 James Brown biopic, *Get on Up*, and C. is known as the "personal photographer," a master of the art of capturing the subject's mood, expression, and personality, and his company, C. Smith Photography Studios, was one of two minority firms to participate in the 1988 Greater Bicentennial Celebration, and his exhibit, "Portraits in Excellence: A Pictorial History of 100 Prominent Living Cincinnatians," gained local recognition and has been displayed throughout the City of Cincinnati since its premiere, and C.'s work has been featured in local institutions, including at the Westin Hotel which opened to much praise; and

WHEREAS, C. has been recognized locally and nationally for his achievements and talent, and in 2008, the Greater Cincinnati Urban League recognized C. as one of its "Glorifying the Lions" award winners, and C. was in the Who's Who in Black Cincinnati in 2013, and the African American Chamber Greater Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky inducted him in its inaugural 2015 Black Business Hall of Fame class; and

WHEREAS, C. is the subject of a new documentary which will feature his work spanning more than 60 years of photography, and he is one of the oldest living Black photographers who has made his living telling the story of others through photos, and C. has spent his life serving others, including working for years as the official photographer of the local NAACP, covering local and national news, including the March on Washington; and

WHEREAS, C.'s catchphrase is "better than good," and as a visual historian who has photographed since before the Civil Rights movement, C. has captured the arts, social commentary, and documented history with his camera, and he has photographed both recognized personalities and ordinary citizens, which has enabled him to gain a national reputation in the field of photography, and his commitment to the Greater Cincinnati community and excellence in photography has been unwavering; and

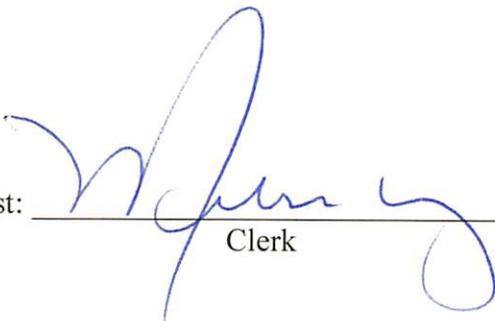
WHEREAS, C. has always encouraged young Black photographers and was responsible for the creation of a photographers association to bring Black photographers together to establish a supportive network for artists; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Cincinnati, State of Ohio:

Section 1. That the Mayor and this Council hereby recognize C. Smith for his contributions to the City of Cincinnati and our community.

Section 2. That this resolution be spread upon the minutes of Council and a copy be provided to C. Smith by the Council Office of Vice Mayor Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney.

Passed: March 16, 2022

Attest: 
Clerk


Aftab Pureval, Mayor

Submitted by Vice Mayor Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney