

RESOLUTION NO. _____ -2021

RECOGNIZING and honoring Ryan L. Messer for his advocacy on behalf of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (“LGBTQIA”) community.

WHEREAS, June is LGBTQ+ Pride Month, which celebrates the LGBTQ+ community and recognizes the impact of LGBTQ+ individuals on the City of Cincinnati; and

WHEREAS, in 1995 on his first visit to a gay bar, Mr. Messer was the victim of a hate crime which left him hospitalized, and that ultimately set the stage for his life’s calling in the area of equity & inclusion; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Messer has worked nationally to help pass the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, as well as locally throughout the greater Cincinnati area; and

WHEREAS, for the past twenty-five years, Mr. Messer has led community-based advocacy and activism in the areas of equality, arts, social justice, and community leadership, serving on the boards of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, Over-the-Rhine Community Council, Future Leaders OTR, Cincinnati Children’s Theater, the Botanical Committee of the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden, the Cincinnati Opera Board, and many others representing the LGBTQ+ community and families; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Messer has worked tirelessly for twenty-three years at Johnson & Johnson, where he co-founded the LGBTQ+ affinity group and led the way for the company’s establishment of same-sex partner benefits, paid paternity leave for all parents, and made Johnson & Johnson the first company in the world to offer in-vitro and surrogacy coverage to same sex couples; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Messer served as an early founder of the Cincinnati chapter of the Human Rights Campaign, serving as the first Federal Club co-chair and later serving on the National Board of Governors; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Messer has served for nearly twenty years on the boards of Stop Aids & Caracole, chairing countless fundraisers and events over the years; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Messer founded the Cincinnati Opera’s “Pride Night,” which many other arts organizations have emulated; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Messer was elected as the first openly LGBTQ+ member of the Cincinnati Board of Education, and served as its Vice President, the first openly LGBTQ+ parent to serve in this capacity on a school board in Ohio; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Messer is a champion for Cincinnati and a tireless advocate for equality, inclusion, and fairness for all; now, therefore,

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

Section 1. That the Mayor and Council of the City of Cincinnati recognize Ryan L. Messer for his advocacy on behalf of the LGBTQIA community.

Section 2. That this resolution be spread upon the minutes of Council and copies be provided to Mr. Messer through the office of Councilmember Chris Seelbach.

Passed: _____, 2021

John Cranley, Mayor

Attest: _____
Clerk

Submitted by Councilmember Chris Seelbach