

## RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_ - 2021

**RECOGNIZING** and honoring Bettye Torrey Oldham for her community and civic leadership, and for her social advocacy in the City of Cincinnati.

WHEREAS, Bettye T. Oldham is an educator, civic-social activist, and world traveler and has contributed much to her City, friends, and family, and is a native Cincinnati born in 1934 to Lillie Holt Torrey and James Torrey, the older sister to Melvin and Ralph Torrey, and the mother to her only child, Tyra Oldham; and

WHEREAS, Bettye's education started at Washburn Elementary, she became a proud graduate of Woodward High School at the early age of 16, and she then entered and graduated from Central State University, a Historically Black College and University (HBCU), and then attended Xavier University to gain her Masters Degree in Education; and

WHEREAS, Bettye spent her career in education as a teacher for two years and then a Visiting Teacher within the Cincinnati Public School System, and although she was requested to be a principal, she saw another way to better her community as an educator, a social and community advocate, and as a mother and educator: Bettye broke the racial barrier at Cincinnati Country Day, enrolling her daughter as one of the first two African Americans to attend the school; and

WHEREAS, Bettye continued to open doors and break barriers within Cincinnati as the first person of color to work for AAA Travel, bringing world travel to many who had not traveled globally, and Bettye and Aileen Reinstatler co-authored a travel book to inspire children to travel called "Kids Safari," and she acted as an ambassador to other cultures and people throughout her career and life, assisting people to visit the globe while hosting others in Cincinnati; and

WHEREAS, as a member of the International Visitors Center, Bettye hosted people and families from around the world in her own home, and her hosting led to sponsoring a woman from Ethiopia to work and live in America, and although her travels took her around the world, her most significant and steadfast commitment was to her family, daughter, and friends, and she was honored for her travels and cooking by *The Cincinnati Enquirer* for international cuisine; and

WHEREAS, Bettye was one of the first African American women to serve on the Cincinnati Symphony and Cincinnati Ballet Boards, and she was a founding member of the Taft Museum's Duncanson Society and the Cincinnati Art Museum's Donald P. Sowell Committee, and was a member of the Urban League Board and introduced the Gala concept, which continues today; and

WHEREAS, Bettye was honored as a Lion by the Urban League, as a prestigious Woman of the Year in 1978, and was honored by Mayor Charlie Luken with a key to the City and a proclamation; and

WHEREAS, after retiring from Cincinnati Public Schools, Bettye was selected as the Alumni Director for her *alma mater*, Central State University, and during her tenure, she was awarded Alumna of the Year in 1994, and Director of Alumni Affairs in 1995; and

WHEREAS, Bettye performed fundraising for the United Way, and there she was honored for her service, and then she was asked to work with the Cincinnati Red Cross, delivering community support and providing volunteer coordination; and

WHEREAS, Bettye's work, friendship, and mentorship inspired others to lead in the community, and she went on to bring the Amistad Research Center to the City of Cincinnati, created the first Red Hat Group for Black women in the City, and she was among the founding members of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, Bettye leads her life by building capacity for change, and serves her community through her patronage of the arts and music and bringing people, hosting artists, and diversity in her home, and Bettye has provided social gatherings and entertainment to build bridges and strengthen our community, and her work to provide access to knowledge, culture, and education has undoubtedly bettered our community; 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 Bettye Torrey Oldham for her 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 Bettye Torrey Oldham by the Council Office of Councilmember Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney.

Passed: \_\_\_\_\_, 2021

\_\_\_\_\_  
John Cranley, Mayor

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk

Submitted by Councilmember Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney