

A Senate resolution

honoring the life of Ronald Alfred Edwards.

WHEREAS, those who serve their communities as advocates for marginalized groups and work to amplify the voices of disenfranchised individuals within our state perform a vital function; and

WHEREAS, Ronald Alfred Edwards, affectionately known as Ron, was born to Mary and Alfred Edwards on January 10, 1937, in Kansas City, Missouri. He moved to Minneapolis at the age of seven and remained an active and involved citizen of the Twin Cities until his death on January 1, 2020; and

WHEREAS, Ron considered himself to be a community advocate who spoke out about the importance of human and civil rights regardless of who held positions of power. In the 1970s, he challenged the all-white Minneapolis Fire Department to desegregate their ranks; and

WHEREAS, despite being an unrelenting critic of police brutality, Ron befriended a number of black officers within the department, finding opportunities for kinship in the effort for people of color to gain acceptance and equity within the institution; and

WHEREAS, in the 1980s, Ron filed lawsuits against the city of Minneapolis, demanding the police department be held accountable for discriminatory hiring practices that excluded people of color, continued instances of police brutality, and departmental abuse of power within the community. He spearheaded the call for a Justice Department investigation into the 1984 police shooting of a young black man named Sal Saran Scott. As a result of his continued activism, Ron was appointed by a federal magistrate to supervise a civilian structure overseeing the process of desegregating the Minneapolis Police Department, spanning nearly 30 years; and

WHEREAS, throughout his life, Ron was involved with a number of civic boards, commissions, and panels. He is believed to be the longest-seated chair of the Minneapolis Urban League and served as the head of the Minneapolis NAACP. For almost 40 years, he hosted "Black Focus," a weekly television program which aired in the Twin Cities, never missing an episode; and

WHEREAS, Ron worked for Northern States Power for many years before retiring and focusing solely on his activism efforts. As one of the most prominent civil rights leaders in the Twin Cities, Ron leaves behind a legacy of brilliance and determination by challenging the status quo and demanding accountability when faced with systemic injustice;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the State of Minnesota that it recognizes the contributions of Ronald Alfred Edwards and extends deep condolences to those whose lives he touched.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is directed to prepare an enrolled copy of this resolution, to be authenticated by the Secretary's signature and that of the Chair of the Senate Rules and Administration Committee, and transmit it to the family of Ronald Alfred Edwards.

Cal R. Ludeman
Secretary of the Senate

Paul E. Gazelka
Chair, Senate Committee on
Rules and Administration

Jeff Hayden
State Senator, District 62

Bobby Joe Champion
State Senator, District 59