

BY ALD. HINES

*Resolution congratulating Bessie M. Gray on her retirement as an early childhood educator and advocate.*

**WHEREAS,**

**BESSIE M. GRAY**

*retired with pride and satisfaction as an early childhood educator and advocate, and celebrated her 48-year career with friends and family at Hilton Garden Inn Park Place on July 21, 2013; and*

**WHEREAS,** *Bessie M. Gray was born on April 27, 1934 in Pine Bluff, Ark., and she moved to Milwaukee shortly after graduating from high school, was united in marriage to Percy Gray, Sr. in 1953, and from their blessed union were born nine children who have benefited from their love, faith, understanding and support; and*

**WHEREAS,** *Bessie M. Gray is a well-known pioneer in establishing quality childcare and education for infants and preschoolers, and is founder and President of Gray's Child Development Center, Inc., which educated elementary school children and provided services for their families in a Christian environment until closing in 2011; and*

**WHEREAS,** *Bessie M. Gray has worked with many educational organizations, including serving as Vice President of Wisconsin Early Childhood Association and currently serving on the State of Wisconsin Department of Children and Families Secretary's Child Care Advisory Committee; and*

**WHEREAS,** *Bessie M. Gray received her bachelor's degree in early childhood education from the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee School of Education and her master's degree in educational administrative leadership from Marquette University, and has won numerous honors and awards throughout her career, notably Milwaukeean of the Month (Milwaukee Magazine 1981) and State of Wisconsin Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Heritage Award (2011); and*

**WHEREAS,** *In 1994, Gray's Child Development Center, which was founded in 1973, became the first African American operated program in the state of Wisconsin to earn accreditation from the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs; and*

**WHEREAS,** *The Bessie M. Gray Scholarship Fund was established in 1996 to provide quality childcare and education for low income and disadvantaged families, and in 2004 the Bessie M. Gray Legacy Awards were established to honor others who have enriched the lives of children; and*

**WHEREAS,** *Bessie M. Gray is a highly respected member of the Milwaukee community and she has been laudably devoted throughout her life to children and their future, and her extensive involvement in the community included years of teaching Sunday School, a nursing home ministry, Salvation Army and many other organizations; now, therefore, be it*

**RESOLVED,** *That the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee herewith congratulates Bessie M. Gray on her retirement and extends its sincere wishes for continued health and happiness; and, be it*

**FURTHER RESOLVED,** *That a suitably engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Bessie M. Gray in recognition of her retirement.*

**Introduced by Common Council President Willie L. Hines and approved by all members of the Milwaukee Common Council on July 2, 2012.**