

**RESOLUTION No. 13-2**

**WHEREAS**, the City Council and the Mayor of the City of Huntsville, Alabama are apprised that the Twenty-eighth Annual Martin Luther King, Jr., Unity Breakfast, will be held on January 21, 2013, in the North Hall of the Von Braun Center. The Unity Breakfast is sponsored each year by The Delta Theta Lambda Education Foundation of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., a non-profit organization, and will host Judge Karen Mills-Francis as keynote speaker. This event is to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and two unsung heroes from our community who give unselfishly of themselves to the causes of unity, justice and equality; and,

**WHEREAS**, proceeds from the MLK Unity Breakfast are used solely by the Delta Theta Lambda Education Foundation to aid students in their pursuit of academic excellence through the awarding of scholarships, mentoring, tutoring and the administration of leadership training; and,

**WHEREAS**, Judge Karen Mills-Francis has a colorful and engaging style that is as distinctive as her bold burgundy robe and her bright blonde hair. As quick to aid the helpless as she is to dismiss the hare-brained, Judge Karen confidently dished out justice to a national television audience with the half-hour syndicated courtroom series, "Judge Karen." She is famous for the lines "Stay in your Lane, I know how to Drive". In the fall of 2010, Judge Karen debuted "Stay In Your Lane: A Guide to Living Your Best Life," a book of anecdotal essays aimed at uplifting and advising readers toward a happier and healthier existence; and,

**WHEREAS**, born and raised in Miami, Florida, Judge Karen was the oldest of five children and graduated valedictorian of her high school class. She completed her undergraduate education at the prestigious Bowdoin College in Maine on a full scholarship and spent summers studying at the University of Wisconsin. After graduation, she worked in the public welfare sector in areas of job training and helping welfare recipients gain employment. She graduated from the Levin School of Law at the University of Florida in 1987; and,

**WHEREAS**, Judge Karen practiced criminal defense law in Florida for 13 years in the Office of the Public Defender as well as in private practice. She was appointed Traffic Magistrate by the Dade County Chief Judge in 1998 to hear non-criminal traffic cases. She was also a family court mediator handling support, visitation and divorce issues. Driven by the lack of diversity in the court system, Judge Karen decided to run for a judgeship in 2000, winning her first election by overthrowing a longtime incumbent and becoming the second black woman to serve on the bench in Miami-Dade County. Judge Karen was assigned to the misdemeanor crimes and domestic violence units of the courts; and,

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**WHEREAS**, after twice being elected to the position of Miami-Dade County Judge, Judge Karen made it her mission to support those who are at risk of getting lost in the legal system. Inspired by her previous work in the Public Defender's office in the Juvenile Division, she has become known as a devoted supporter of children's advocacy programs and domestic violence prevention programs. She often calls on lawyers to act on behalf of children in crisis. She became a foster mother herself to a child she first encountered in court and has repeatedly opened her home to children in need.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the City Council and Mayor of the City of Huntsville, Alabama, gratefully acknowledge and extend a warm and hospitable welcome to the distinguished guest speaker for the Twenty-eighth Annual Martin Luther King, Jr., Unity Breakfast, Judge Karen Mills-Francis. We wish both the Delta Theta Lambda Education Foundation of Alpha Phi Fraternity, Inc., and Judge Karen much success in all future endeavors.

**ADOPTED** on this the 10th day of January, 2013.

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President of the City Council of the  
City of Huntsville, Alabama

**APPROVED** on this the 10th day of January, 2013.

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Mayor of the City of Huntsville, Alabama