

RESOLUTION NO. 13-699

WHEREAS, the City Council and Mayor of the City of Huntsville, Alabama, are apprised that the Union Chapel Christian Academy Foundation, Inc., is hosting its Second Annual Scholarship Gala to be held in the Boone-Lacey Fellowship Hall, Union Chapel Missionary Baptist Church on September 26, 2013. The theme for the Gala is "Integrating Educational Practices through STEM;" and,

WHEREAS, Dr. Vernessa McKenzie Edwards is a scholarly assistant professor in the Department of Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics in the College of Engineering, Technology and Physical Sciences, at her Alma Mater, Alabama A&M University. She earned her educational degrees with high honors from Alabama A&M University, including the Bachelor of Science degree in applied physics, 1983; Master of Science, physics, 2001; and the Doctor of Philosophy, physics (optics/lasers), 2004; and,

WHEREAS, at Alabama A&M University, Dr. Edwards, a STEM pioneer, is known as a researcher and physics educator who has been extensively involved in the research arena, ranging from optics to the development of new techniques aimed at cancer research. She partnered with an Alabama A&M University colleague in a national initiative designed to boost the number of graduates in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields by attracting middle school students in the SMART program funded by the NASA Science and Technology Institute. The three components of the program were partially coordinated by Dr. Edwards. She managed the Summer Science Training Program (SSTP), the Summer Technology Institute for Teachers (STIT) and the Integrated Science Experiments (ISE). She also provided the students a comprehensive diet of hands-on math, science and nanotechnology; and,

WHEREAS, Dr. Edwards has been successful in recruiting students to pursue a major in physics while mentoring and advising them on various research and senior design projects in STEM disciplines. Moreover, she upgraded major curricula offerings in the physics undergraduate program and co-chaired Alabama A&M University's Annual STEM Day. In the area of publication and research, she has authored and co-authored several publications that appeared in STEM journals and magazines. She has presented research papers and projects at national conferences. Additionally, Dr. Edwards has written grants and received funds to further strengthen the learning experiences of students in the STEM disciplines; and,

WHEREAS, she is a member of the following professional organizations: American Physics Society, American Association of Physics Teachers, and the National Society of Black Physicists. Her civic and community affiliations include: member, Union Hill Primitive Baptist Church, where she serves on the board of trustees and is a Bible class teacher; Lunch Buddy mentor, Rolling Hills Elementary School; and Parent Volunteer, Union Chapel Christian Academy; and,

WHEREAS, in recognition of her dedicated service to her profession and to the community, she has received several honors and awards such as the 2013 Faculty of the Year award for teaching, College of Engineering; Technology and Physical Sciences, Alabama A&M University; and the 2013 President's Medallion of Commendation; and,

WHEREAS, Dr. Edwards and her husband, Eric, are the proud parents of four children; and,

WHEREAS, the members of the Board of Directors of the Union Chapel Christian Academy Foundation, Inc., congratulate Dr. Vernessa McKenzie Edwards for her mentorship in "Inspiring Young Minds to Succeed" and for receiving the Inspiring Minds STEM Award.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council and Mayor of the City of Huntsville, Alabama, gratefully acknowledge and congratulate the Union Chapel Christian Academy Foundation, Inc., on their Second Annual Scholarship Gala and extend best wishes for continued success.

ADOPTED on this the 26th day of September, 2013.

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

APPROVED on this the 26th day of September, 2013.

Mayor of the City of Huntsville, Alabama