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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY OF CHICAGO

RAHM EMANUEL
MAYOR

November 15, 2017

TO THE HONORABLE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
CHICAGO

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I transmit herewith, together with Alderman Dowell, a congratulatory resolution regarding Kamau Murray, the founder of XS Tennis.

Your favorable consideration of this resolution will be appreciated.

Mayor

Very truly yours,

H resolution

adopted by The City Council

of the City of Chicago, Illinois

Alderman Pat Dowell, and

presented by Mayor Rahm Emanuel

On November 15, 2017

WHEREAS, The Members of this Chamber are pleased to congratulate Kamau Murray, the founder of XS Tennis; for his tireless efforts on behalf of children, especially disadvantaged children on the south side of Chicago; and

WHEREAS, A Chicago native who grew up in the South Shore neighborhood, Mr. Murray started playing tennis at the age of seven, and continued playing the game throughout his years with the After-School Program of the Chicago Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, A top player at highly regarded Whitney Young Magnet High School, Mr. Murray graduated from the university as a member of the tennis team; he was hired by the university as a coach; he pursued a master's degree in finance; and

WHEREAS, After graduate school, Mr. Murray worked in marketing with pharmaceutical giant Pfizer in Manhattan before transferring to Chicago in 2005; and

WHEREAS, To earn extra money and stay involved in the sport he had grown up with, Mr. Murray devoted a few evenings a week to teaching tennis to a handful of South Side children; and

WHEREAS, Realizing that over one thousand college tennis scholarships go unused every year because of a lack of talented high school tennis players, Mr. Murray saw an opportunity to provide a way for underserved, low-income youth to attend college; and

WHEREAS, In 2005, Mr. Murray founded XS tennis, a South Side not-for-profit tennis facility that offered tennis training and academic tutoring to the City's underserved youth. He began recruiting children with tennis potential and a way for them to attain tennis scholarships for college. To date, approximately 50 of his students have received tennis scholarships; and

WHEREAS, By 2008, Mr. Murray had a growing number of children eager to learn tennis. He convinced his father to provide the capital necessary to buy out the contract of the tennis operator at the Bally fitness center at 47th Street and Lake Park Avenue in the Kenwood neighborhood, where he expanded

the capacity of XS Tennis; and

WHEREAS, Also in 2008, XS Tennis formed XS Tennis and Education Foundation ("XSTEF") in order to reach and support a greater number of Chicago's underserved urban youth. Through its in-school program, XSTEF brings tennis into ten CPS elementary schools on the South Side in at-risk communities, introducing a pathway that continues through the XSTEF after school and summer camp programs. XSTEF now benefits nearly 3,000 students; and

WHEREAS, On November 1, 2017, XS Tennis moved into XS Tennis Village, a brand new state-of-the-art \$16 million dollar facility at 5336 South State Street. The XS Tennis Village boasts 12 indoor courts, 15 outdoor courts (four of them clay), and classrooms to serve 5,000 students a year. The facility covers 13 acres and is anchored by a 116,000 square-foot building. XS Tennis Village includes a fitness center and multipurpose space for dance and other activities. The University of Chicago provides academic tutoring and tennis practices at the facility attracting major national junior tournaments; and

WHEREAS, XS Tennis is justifiably proud to have sent more; minority students to Division 1 schools with tennis scholarships than any other tennis organization in the Nation; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Murray, has coached several nationally renowned tennis players, including Sloane Stephens; and

- Sloane Stephens won the U. S. Open in 2017 at the age of 24, She began playing tennis at the age of nine and has participated in every Grand Slam tournament since 2008. Her path to the U. S. Open title was a difficult one. She had to withdraw from tennis tournaments in August of 2016 because of a right-foot stress fracture. Following surgery in January of 2017, she was unable to walk for a month. Coach Murray was there to provide moral support, for her during, this difficult time. Nine months later she was the women's U. S, Open winner. Sloane Stephens was the lowest ranked, player (83rd) ever to win the U. S. Open, defeating seven highly-regarded players including one of the legends, Venus Williams. Murray's coaching Ms. Stephens in 2015; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled, this fifteenth day of November, 2017, do hereby congratulate Kamau Murray for establishing XS Tennis and bringing so much hope to disadvantaged children; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to Kamau Murray as a token of our esteem and good wishes for his continued success in improving the lives and prospects of thousands of Chicago's teenagers.