CITY OF
BLOOMINGTON
MINNESOTA

DATE: November 25, 2015

TO: Gene Winstead, Mayor

FROM: Lorinda Pearson, Human Services Division Manager

CC: Jamie Verbrugge, City Manager
Diann Kirby, Community Services Director
Dennis Kane, Human Rights Commission Chairperson

RE: 2015 Human Rights Day Proclamation
2015 Omar Bonderud Human Rights Award Presentation

Attached is information regarding the two Council Agenda items for December 7, 2015.

2015 Human Rights Day Proclamation

[Mayor Winstead will read the Human Rights Day Proclamation.]

[Dennis Kane, Human Rights Commission Chairperson, will accept the Proclamation.]

Human Rights Day is a time for people to reflect about the meaning, importance, and the need for human rights. December 10th, 1948 was the date chosen to honor the United Nations General Assembly's adoption and proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights arose directly from the experience of the Second World War and represents the first global expression of rights to which all human beings are inherently entitled. The Bloomington Human Rights Commission annually recognizes the anniversary and invites its residents to continue to work toward making Bloomington a model for fair and equal rights for ALL persons.

2015 Omar Bonderud Human Rights Award Presentation

The Human Rights Commission is pleased to recognize The Honorable Michael J. Davis and The Honorable Donovan W. Frank at the December 7, 2015 City Council meeting with the 2015 Omar Bonderud Award. HRC Commissioner Chairperson Dennis Kane will be available to assist with the presentation of the Omar Bonderud Awards.

Background Information:

In May of 2013, U.S. District Senior Judge Michael Davis and U.S. District Judge Donovan Frank were the driving forces of the **Dred and Harriet Scott events** that occurred in the City of Bloomington. Judge Donovan Frank was in charge of the U.S. District Courts *Open Doors Federal Courts* program which brought a rich program about the Scotts and their pursuit for freedom to 800 Bloomington high school students. It inspired a similar high school program in Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Judges Davis and Frank spearheaded the Legacy of Courage and Freedom: Dred and Harriet Scott community event that took place at Bloomington Civic Plaza and featured Lynne Jackson, great-great granddaughter of Dred and Harriet Scott. Nearly 350 people attended the community event.

Additionally, Judge Davis and Judge Frank were both actively involved in the promotion of the dedication and installation of the informational plaques about Dred and Harriet Scott at Dred Scott Playfields.

Dred and Harriet Scott were slaves who sued for their freedom, enduring a legal battle that ended in one of the most infamous United States Supreme Court decisions in our history. The Scotts based their claim in part on their enslavement in Fort Snelling, which was in a free territory. The Supreme Court held against them, but the decision enraged the anti-slavery movement and contributed to the start of the Civil War in 1861. It led to the Emancipation Proclamation, and the decision was overturned by the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. Dred and Harriet Scott's contribution played a major role in ending the unspeakable evil of slavery.

Judge Donovan Frank is the federal judge who heads the Court's **naturalization ceremonies**. In September 2014, he handled Bloomington's first naturalization ceremony at Bloomington Civic Plaza, where immigrants from Bloomington and neighboring communities became U.S. citizens. In the past 2 years, Judge Frank has naturalized approximately 400 immigrants at the Bloomington ceremonies.

Judge Frank is extremely dedicated to naturalization efforts in Bloomington and throughout the state. For example, at a recent bar event that he attended, Judge Frank's immediate concern was that he needed to get to the hospital bed of a terminally ill immigrant that afternoon, whose wish was to become a U.S. citizen before he died. Judge Frank went to go the man's bedside to perform a naturalization ceremony so the man's wish would be honored. This is indicative of Judge Frank's sensitivity and understanding of both the rights and the concerns of immigrants.

Senior Judge Davis was responsible for bringing the **Freedom Riders Exhibit** to Minnesota. The exhibit features powerful photography, news coverage, and first hand audio accounts from the Freedom Rider, the Kennedy administration and the international community. The exhibit was on display at Bloomington Civic Plaza for a two week time period and included a community event featuring Bettie Mae Fikes, former leader for the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and Freedom Singer.

In May of 2015, the Bloomington Human Rights Commission hosted an event at Bloomington Civic Plaza, **Mr. Civil Rights: Thurgood Marshall**, which was put on in partnership with the U.S. District Court District of Minnesota. Senior Judge Davis and Judge Frank provided leadership for the event and served as experts panelists for the discussion. The event was attended by about 250 people, and raised awareness of the past and continuing struggle for equal rights on the basis of race and other protected class status.

In addition, Judge Davis provided guidance and leadership for the 2015 Open Doors program which also focused on Thurgood Marshall. Bloomington students learned about Justice Marshall and the impact he had on all Americans.

On July 23, 2015, the Human Rights Commission sponsored **the 25th anniversary of passage of the ADA** program. Judge Frank was actively involved, including participating on a panel discussion.

Judge Frank has worked tirelessly to ensure the rights of people with disabilities are recognized and respected in our legal system. For example, he is a key figure in approving Minnesota's Olmstead Plan, designed to help people with disabilities become included in their communities to the greatest extent possible. The July 23 program was attended by almost 100 people.

All of these efforts by Judges Davis and Frank represent a substantial effort toward educating and winning equality and justice for groups of people whose circumstances make them vulnerable to prejudice, discrimination or injustice. These community events provide education for people about discrimination based on race, national origin, and disability, and that education is a step toward the knowledge that will reduce discrimination, and empower members of protected classes.

Both judges' visibility and active participation in programs like those described above make the courts more accessible to those who are the subjects of discrimination, either now or in the past.

Please join me in recognizing The Honorable Michael J. Davis and the Honorable Donovan W. Frank.

- [Mayor Winstead and Human Rights Commission Chairperson Dennis Kane will present the 2015 Omar Bonderud Human Rights Award to the Judges.]
- [Senior Judge Davis and Judge Frank will be given an opportunity to address the Council.]
- [Grant Parker will take a few photos.]

LP/tls