



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** RES 20-1680, **Version:** 1

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Honoring and commemorating the life and contributions of Winston Xouda Thao aka Blia Yang Thao.

WHEREAS, Blia Yang Thao was born on August 10th, 1954 at Dej Cog Ntoo near Phakhao City in Xieng Khouang Province, Laos; and

WHEREAS, his father Soua Lao Thao and mother Bee Her raised five sons and four daughters during the Secret War; and

WHEREAS, in 1962, Blia Yang Thao went to Phakhao Elementary Public Schools in Xieng Khouang Province, Laos; and

WHEREAS, in 1968, Blia Yang Thao went to Samthang in Xieng Khouang Province, to study and eventually taught in multiple provinces in Laos; and

WHEREAS, between 1971 and 1978, Blia Yang Thao and his family moved around to various villages in Xieng Khouang Province to avoid the Secret War; and

WHEREAS, after the Secret War, Blia Yang Thao sought refuge in Thailand with his family in 1979, and lived in the refugee camp Ban Vinai; and

WHEREAS, Blia Yang Thao and his family settled in Sherbrooke, Quebec, Canada in July of 1979, being one of the first Hmong people to reside in Canada; and

WHEREAS, Blia Yang Thao, being an educator, helped other refugee families transition from their old lives to new ones in a foreign country; and

WHEREAS, in 1982, Blia Yang Thao and his family resettled into Kitchener, Ontario, Canada to be with more Hmong people; and

WHEREAS, Blia Yang Thao established and became the president of the Hmong Association of Canada between 1985 and 1986; and

WHEREAS, in 1995, Blia Yang Thao resettled in St. Paul, Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, Blia Yang Thao was a strong supporter of entrepreneurship, community development, and education; and

WHEREAS, Blia Yang Thao was instrumental as a board member to Noble Academy and Hmong Language and Culture Inc; and

WHEREAS, Blia Yang Thao also became an educator in the Hmong Culture and Language Program summer camp for St. Paul families; and

WHEREAS, Blia Yang Thao also served as a mediator to resolve disputes in the Hmong American community; and

WHEREAS, Blia Yang Thao became a top advisor to Hmong Hapo Association and ThaoKue National; and

WHEREAS, Blia Yang Thao continued his passion in education by receiving his Bachelor's degree in Education from Concordia University at the age of 60 and completed his Master's degree in Strategic Leadership from Bethel University at the age of 64, while also pursuing his Doctorate's degree in education; and now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, the City of Saint Paul honors and commemorates the life and contributions of Blia Yang Thao; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the City of Saint Paul extends its heartfelt condolences to the family of Blia Yang Thao.