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## **‘Compassionate Tulsa’: Joint Resolution of Mayor, City Council Launches New Human Rights Initiative**

Mayor Dewey F. Bartlett Jr. and the Tulsa City Council have signed a resolution (attached) designating the City of Tulsa as a “Compassionate Community,” and calling for the Human Rights Commission to establish “Compassionate Tulsa,” a committee of citizens who will carry the message of compassion throughout our city, encouraging and recognizing acts of compassion in Tulsa.

“Adopting this resolution as a city confirms our commitment to living out compassion in all aspects of life,” Mayor Dewey Bartlett said. “Tulsa is already known as a friendly and welcoming city, and compassion will continue to promote peace and attract a diverse population that already makes Tulsa unique.”

The Tulsa Human Rights Commission has been working with the Tulsa Interfaith Alliance to have Tulsa designated as a Compassionate Community, the first in Oklahoma. Tulsa joins at least 60 other Compassionate Communities worldwide. The vision and mission statement of Compassionate Tulsa is inspired by the international Charter for Compassion.

The Charter for Compassion was unveiled to international acclaim by British interfaith scholar Karen Armstrong on Nov. 12, 2009. The event was commemorated in Tulsa on Nov. 15, 2009, with an interfaith celebration at Boston Avenue United Methodist Church.

Compassionate Tulsa will include members of the Human Rights Commission and other Tulsa representatives of the arts; business; communities; education; environment; health care; peace and nonviolence; religion, spirituality and interfaith; science and research. This committee will promote a lifestyle of compassion in our city, documenting acts of compassion and organizing more ways for Tulsans to show their compassion.

Compassionate Tulsa has been developed through the efforts of a five-member task force including Dr. Andrea C. Walker, Ph.D, Vice-Chair of the Tulsa Human Rights Commission; Rev. Bob Lawrence, Executive Director of the Tulsa Interfaith Alliance; Human Rights Commissioner Rebecca Marks-Jimerson; Vicki Langston, community volunteer and director of the Open Tables program at Boston Avenue United Methodist Church; and Pam Rosser, Mayor’s Liaison to the Human Rights Commission.

Tulsa is the only municipality in Oklahoma with a Human Rights Commission. The purpose of the Human Rights Commission is to receive, hear and investigate complaints arising from acts or

practices of discrimination. Commissioners are appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council.

The Tulsa Interfaith Alliance is a non-partisan, faith-based advocacy group that works diligently to maintain the separation of church and state, to address issues of unconstitutional religious expression, and to raise awareness of the greater good that people of all faiths, and no faith, bring to society.

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