

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 260092)

RESOLUTION

Honoring the legacy of William Thaddeus Coleman Jr. and recognizing March 10, 2026, as “William Thaddeus Coleman Jr. Day” in the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, As the City of Philadelphia joins the nation in commemorating the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, it is fitting to honor individuals whose lives and work meaningfully expanded the promise of American democracy; and

WHEREAS, William Thaddeus Coleman Jr., a nationally recognized leader, civil rights champion, and proud Philadelphian, was born and raised in Philadelphia, where his father operated the Wissahickon Boys Club, and where he graduated from Germantown High School; and

WHEREAS, Secretary Coleman graduated summa cum laude from the University of Pennsylvania and magna cum laude, first in his class, from Harvard Law School, where he was the third Black member of the Harvard Law Review; and

WHEREAS, Secretary Coleman broke numerous racial barriers throughout his legal career, including becoming the first Black law clerk to a Justice of the United States Supreme Court and the first Black attorney at major Philadelphia law firms, ultimately becoming one of the most successful and influential partners at Dilworth Paxson LLP; and

WHEREAS, Secretary Coleman dedicated countless hours to advancing civil rights and equal justice under law, including serving as lead counsel in the landmark Girard College will case and acting as the principal author of the Supreme Court brief in *Brown v. Board of Education*, in which he also served as first chair during five days of oral argument; and

WHEREAS, Secretary Coleman served the nation with distinction as the second Black member of a Presidential Cabinet, holding office as United States Secretary of Transportation, and later served on the boards of numerous major American corporations; and

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 260092 continued

WHEREAS, In recognition of his extraordinary service, Secretary Coleman was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President William J. Clinton; and

WHEREAS, Following his passing, Secretary Coleman was further honored when the United States Department of Transportation headquarters building in Washington, D.C. was named in his honor, and when he was laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery between Supreme Court Justices Thurgood Marshall, one of his closest friends, and Ruth Bader Ginsburg; and

WHEREAS, Secretary Coleman's legacy continues to be celebrated nationwide, including through the work of the William Thaddeus Coleman Jr. Foundation, which will convene a symposium on March 10, 2026, at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia bringing together his family, friends, and distinguished admirers to reflect on his enduring impact; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia recognizes that Secretary Coleman's legendary and incomparable contributions to the expansion of constitutional rights, freedoms, and opportunities for those historically denied them represent the very highest ideals of public service and citizenship; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby honors the life and legacy of William Thaddeus Coleman Jr. and proclaims March 10, 2026, as "William Thaddeus Coleman Jr. Day" in the City of Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That City Council extends its deepest gratitude to the Coleman family and directs that this resolution be presented to his son, Hardin Coleman, at the March 10, 2026, symposium in recognition of Secretary Coleman's extraordinary contributions to the City, the Nation, and the cause of justice.

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 260092 continued

CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the fifth day of February, 2026.

Kenyatta Johnson
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Elizabeth McCollum
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Bass

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Bass, Phillips, Gilmore Richardson, Gauthier, Thomas, Jones, Landau, Lozada, Young, Brooks, Harrity, O'Rourke, Driscoll, O'Neill, Squilla and Ahmad