



City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

RESOLUTION NO. 250617

Introduced June 5, 2025

Councilmember Lozada

RESOLUTION

Renaming 5th Street between Huntingdon and Somerset St to “Jesse Malpica Bermudez Way” to honor the life and legacy of Jesse Malpica Bermudez, a cultural icon, advocate, and champion of Latin music and community empowerment in Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, For over four decades, Jesse Malpica Bermudez (herein referred to as “Jesse”) was a visionary leader and tireless advocate for Latin artists and musicians in Philadelphia. Born to a Puerto Rican father and Cuban mother, Jesse was deeply rooted in rich cultural traditions, which he channeled into a lifelong mission to elevate Latin music and empower his community; and

WHEREAS, Jesse began his musical journey as a young performer and later formed a doo-wop group during his service in the U.S. Navy, before transitioning into Latin music promotion. In the 1970s and 1980s, he produced major concerts, including the iconic *Salsa con Salsa* series, featuring legends like Celia Cruz, Willie Colón, and Héctor Lavoe. He used these platforms not only to celebrate music but also to fight for equity and opportunity for Latino musicians; and

WHEREAS, In 1982, Jesse co-founded the Asociación de Músicos Latinoamericanos (AMLA) to advocate for better working conditions and fair compensation for Latino musicians. Recognizing the need for deeper support of Latin artists, Jesse also founded the Latin School for the Performing Arts, providing education, mentorship, and career opportunities for aspiring musicians; and

WHEREAS, Jesse’s work extended far beyond music. He was a community bridge-builder, a mentor, and an unwavering advocate for access, opportunity, and justice. He devoted his life to ensuring that Latin music and the Latino community received the recognition, respect, and resources they deserved. As Izzy Colón aptly stated, “I consider Jesse a local patriarch of Latin music here in the City of Philadelphia”; and

WHEREAS, Jesse was instrumental in opening doors for countless artists, always working behind the scenes to connect people with resources, share opportunities, and remind all that Latin

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music is a universal language that unites across cultures and communities. He was known not just for his passion, but also for his integrity, humility, and unwavering commitment to service; and

WHEREAS, In recognition of his cultural contributions, the Philadelphia City Council unanimously established “Jesse Bermudez Day” on July 8th through a resolution introduced by former Councilmember Maria Quiñones-Sánchez in 2015. This day, marked by the *Siempre Salsa* celebration, brought together diverse communities through the joy of music a tradition Jesse held dear; and

WHEREAS, Over the span of four decades, Jesse received numerous accolades, including the WPVI-TV6 Community Award, the Campeón de los Niños Award (2007), Latin Beat Magazine’s Siempre Salsa Award, the Puerto Rican Alliance Award, the Barrio Salsa Award (2006), and recognition as one of Pennsylvania’s 100 Most Influential Leaders in 2018. Posthumously, he was honored with AL DÍA’s Performing Arts Archetype Award (2022) and the Taller Puertorriqueño Lifetime Achievement Award (2023); and

WHEREAS, Jesse passed away at the age of 79, leaving a profound legacy of cultural pride, musical excellence, and community empowerment. Though he never sought recognition for his work, his impact is undeniable. He often said it took a village, and he was blessed to walk his journey alongside many who shared his vision; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Renames 5th Street between Huntingdon Street and Somerset Street to “Jesse Malpica Bermudez Way” in honor of Jesse’s extraordinary life, legacy, and enduring contributions to the Latino community, the arts, and the cultural fabric of Philadelphia. This co-naming stands as a permanent tribute to a man who united communities, uplifted generations, and made Philadelphia a more inclusive and vibrant City.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this Resolution be presented to the family of Jesse Malpica Bermudez as a lasting expression of the sincere admiration, deep respect, and heartfelt gratitude of the City of Philadelphia for his extraordinary contributions to Latin music, cultural advocacy, and the empowerment of generations within the community he so passionately served.