

City of Philadelphia



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

(Resolution No. 250908)

RESOLUTION

Honoring the life and legacy of the acclaimed musician, D'Angelo, who chose his truth over any accolades or accomplishments, therefore achieving a success that leaves him with few peers.

WHEREAS, Michael Eugene Archer, known professionally as D'Angelo, was born on February 11, 1974, in Richmond, Virginia, to parents Mariann Smith and Luther Archer Sr. His father and grandfather served as Pentecostal preachers, grounding him in the musical traditions of the church; and

WHEREAS, From a very young age D'Angelo exhibited remarkable musical gifts, reportedly playing piano by ear at age three in his family home and accompanying his father in church services by age five; and

WHEREAS, He was raised in Richmond, Virginia, immersed in both gospel and secular influences, and by his teenage years had formed a musical group in Richmond and participated in Amateur Night at the Apollo Theater in Harlem, New York, where he won three consecutive nights; and

WHEREAS, He stood at the crossroads between spiritual and secular music that so many Black artists confront, and, critically, chose both after being instructed by his grandmother, Alberta Cox, to play the music in his heart; and

WHEREAS, With her blessing ringing in his ears, he relocated to New York City in pursuit of his musical aspirations, writing, performing, and working with collaborators in search of the next movement in Black music; and

WHEREAS, D'Angelo's recording career spanned more than three decades, during which he released legendary albums including Brown Sugar (1995), Voodoo (2000), and Black Messiah (2014); his work earned him multiple Grammy Awards and critical acclaim for his artistry as singer, songwriter, producer, and multi-instrumentalist; and

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 250908 continued

WHEREAS, D'Angelo honored his gift by refusing to fall into easy commodification or consumption, with a deep dedication to the imperfect ingenuity of live performance, a true preference for songwriting over hitmaking; and

WHEREAS, D'Angelo honored his ancestors by seeking out the sounds of the Black diaspora, from the Caribbean and the continent to the Black American church and his cassette player, as he imbibed the music of Prince, Otis Redding, James Brown, Sly & the Family Stone, Parliament-Funkadelic, and so many more; and

WHEREAS, As part of a profound dedication to soul music, D'Angelo honored the history that Philadelphia shares with the other hubs of gospel, blues, and doo wop, like New York, Memphis, St. Louis, and Detroit, as the urban cauldrons of love, pain, oppression, freedom, and hope that created soul music; and

WHEREAS, D'Angelo never hesitated to explain that he was making Black music for Black people first and foremost, as best exemplified by his choice to hurry the release of Black Messiah in direct response to the verdicts in the cases of Mike Brown and Eric Garner, making the project part of the soundtrack for the then-emerging Movement for Black Lives; and

WHEREAS, D'Angelo's music captured the essence of Black life as a way of telling the human story, held the line against a music industry that he scorned, and inspired many moments of ecstasy, both worldly and spiritual; and

WHEREAS, D'Angelo immortalized Philly in the annals of 90s R&B, as the locale where he met the titular, all-important 'Brown Sugar'; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Honors the life and legacy of the acclaimed musician, D'Angelo, who chose his truth over any accolades or accomplishment, therefore achieving a success that leaves him with few peers.

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 250908 continued

CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the sixteenth day of October, 2025.

Kenyatta Johnson
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Elizabeth McCollum
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember O'Rourke

Sponsored by: Councilmembers O'Rourke, Phillips, Gilmore Richardson,
Gauthier, Jones, Landau, Brooks, Harrity, Driscoll and Squilla