

# City of Philadelphia



(Bill No. 010303)

## AN ORDINANCE

Authorizing and directing the change of the Northwest Regional Branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia, located at Cheltenham Avenue and Greene Street to "The Joseph E. Coleman Regional Library of the Free Library of Philadelphia."

WHEREAS, Joseph Coleman was born in West Point, Mississippi and, despite having encountered racism as a child and adult, rose above adversity and preconceived limitations to become the first African American Council President of Philadelphia County. Mr. Coleman was also able to achieve a number of other firsts in academics and distinguished work experience in the field of law and chemistry; and

WHEREAS, Under his leadership, the legislative body of Philadelphia's reputation was restored. Mr. Coleman also introduced initiatives that have proven successful to the maintenance of power balance(s) within, and between, the branches of municipal government; and

WHEREAS, Colleagues and current council members alike viewed him as a man willing to share power. A builder of consensus, Mr. Coleman was able to quietly build Council power and, in doing so, was able to transform it from complacency into an independent and viable voice; and

WHEREAS, Despite the first years of Mr. Coleman's presidency being marked by a series of damaging controversies, his ability to bring decorum to Council did not go unnoticed. Disturbances gradually subsided from prolonged tirades to orderly exchanges that could usually be quieted by the president's gavel; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Coleman treasured his family, wife Jessie Bryant Coleman and children, Gregory, Jennifer and Stephanie, and instilled in his offspring a love and respect for education. His deep sense of loyalty to them allowed him to be a pillar of strength following the brutal and senseless murder of his daughter, Stephanie Coleman Epps; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Coleman's personal sense of self worth and belief in equality and the Brotherhood of man, that was instilled in the midst of a childhood lived, as he characterized it, "within two worlds at a time when segregation was the law of the state", were qualities that remained constant throughout his life; and

WHEREAS, Known for his civility and inspiring personal accomplishments, he will long be remembered as having brought a steady hand to the City's legislative body between 1980 and 1992; and

# City of Philadelphia

BILL NO. 010303 continued

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WHEREAS, In appreciation of Former President Joseph E. Coleman's service to the Eighth Councilmanic District, City Council and the Philadelphia community at large, we honor his memory and would like to see his name and memory honored on the institution that he loved and so greatly, through example, honored; now therefore

*THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA HEREBY ORDAINS:*

SECTION 1. The Northwest Regional Branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia located at Cheltenham Avenue and Greene Street is hereby named and designated "The Joseph E. Coleman Regional Library of the Free Library of Philadelphia."

SECTION 2. Any ordinance inconsistent herewith is hereby repealed.

SECTION 3. This Ordinance shall take effect immediately.

# City of Philadelphia

BILL NO. 010303 continued

Certified Copy

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BILL NO. 010303 continued

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Bill, Passed by the City Council on May 31, 2001. The Bill was Signed by the Mayor on June 14, 2001.



Marie B. Hauser  
Chief Clerk of the City Council