

City of Philadelphia



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

(Resolution No. 230139)

RESOLUTION

Renaming the 4900 block of Walnut Street “Paul L. Robeson Way” to honor the life and legacy of Paul Leroy Robeson, Esq., Actor, Singer, Athlete, Lawyer, Author, Activist, Scholar, Linguist and American Hero. Recognizing and honoring Philadelphia’s Paul Leroy Robeson, on his 125th birthday and his exemplary service to the world with special acknowledgment of his leadership in civil rights, sports, and the arts.

WHEREAS, Paul Leroy Robeson, Esq. was the son of the Rev. William Drew Robeson and Maria Louisa Bustill Robeson, born on April 9, 1898, who descended from an illustrious family that included Cyrus Bustill, a baker who supplied bread to George Washington’s troops at Valley Forge and Humphrey Morrey, first mayor of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Paul Leroy Robeson graduated valedictorian from Rutgers University and also received his law degree from Columbia University Law School; and

WHEREAS, Paul Leroy Robeson was a renowned singer known for his signature song “Ol’ Man River,” the first African American to play OTHELLO on Broadway and the star of Hollywood and independent movies and performed in Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Paul Leroy Robeson was a social activist who spoke out in favor of human rights in the United States and underdeveloped countries, and against global oppression, earning him the respect and friendship of many luminaries and

WHEREAS, Paul Leroy Robeson, was branded a Communist sympathizer in his own country, was brought before the U.S. House Un-American Activities Committee for his perceived Communist leanings, was stripped of his passport, limiting his right to travel and denied him the ability to make a living; and

WHEREAS, Paul Leroy Robeson, following the death of his wife Eslanda Cardozo Goode Robeson, came to Philadelphia to spend his final years with his sister, Marian Robeson Forsythe, and following his passing the house at 4951 Walnut Street was named in his honor as well as

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Paul Robeson High School for Human Services along with many libraries and institutions across the country honoring his name; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Rename the 4900 block of Walnut Street, “Paul L. Robeson Way”, to honor the exemplary life and legacy of Paul Leroy Robeson as a superb actor, singer, activist, orator, lawyer, author, linguist, athlete, scholar, and true American Hero.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the second day of March, 2023.

Darrell L. Clarke
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Michael A. Decker
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Gauthier

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Gauthier, Brooks, Driscoll, Thomas, Lozada,
Gilmore Richardson, Jones and Phillips