



City of Philadelphia

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

RESOLUTION NO. 250461

Introduced May 1, 2025

Councilmember Squilla

RESOLUTION

Also naming South Broad Street between Pine and Lombard Streets as "Teddy Pendergrass Way" to honor the life and legacy of South Philadelphia legendary entertainer Teddy Pendergrass.

WHEREAS, Teddy Pendergrass was born Theodore DeReese Pendergrass March 26th, 1950, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, Raised in Philadelphia at a young age Teddy began singing gospel and playing drums in church. At age 10, he became an ordained minister, and as a teen Pendergrass played drums for the vocal group The Cadillacs; and

WHEREAS, Teddy's rhythmic skills earned him a spot in The Blue Notes, led by Harold Melvin. In 1970, Pendergrass stepped out from behind the drumkit and became the lead singer. In 1972, the newly revamped Harold Melvin and The Blue Notes signed with Philadelphia International Records (PIR) and scored their first Top 10 R&B hit with "I Miss You". The group is best known for 1972's "If You Don't Know Me By Now" which topped the US R&B chart and peaked at No. 3 on the Billboard Hot 100. With Pendergrass as the lead, The Blue Notes also topped the R&B charts with "The Love I Lost" (1973) and "Wake Up Everybody" (1975); and

WHEREAS, In 1975, Pendergrass left the group and established a solo career releasing his self-titled solo debut, a Top 10 R&B hit that achieved platinum sales. He received his first Grammy nomination (for Best R&B Vocal Performance, Male) for his 1978 single "Close The Door." Pendergrass made history for being the first black singer to have five consecutive platinum albums. Notable singles include "Turn off The Light's," and "Love TKO" his streak ran from 1977's Teddy Pendergrass to 1981's It's Time for Love; and

WHEREAS, A 1982 car accident in Philadelphia left Pendergrass paralyzed from the chest down and confined to a wheelchair. The singer completed physical therapy and, against all odds, returned in 1984 with Love Language, featuring "Hold Me," a duet with Whitney Houston. To date that album has sold over 2 million copies; and

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WHEREAS, In 1985 he performed in “Live Aid” his first live performance since the accident in front of an audience of over 100,000 people and a television viewership estimated to be over 1.5 billion. In 1998 he published his memoirs in the book “Truly Blessed”. In that same year, Pendergrass released his fourteenth and final album, This Christmas (I’d Rather Have Love); and

WHEREAS, Teddy Pendergrass died January 13th, 2010, at age 59 surrounded by wife Joan Pendergrass, and friends. Teddy left behind a rich musical legacy, and the groundwork for the Teddy & Joan Pendergrass Foundation which assists organizations working with individuals with spinal cord injuries (SCI); now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby renames the 400 block of South Broad Street as “Teddy Pendergrass Way” to honor the life and legacy of Teddy Pendergrass and the musical contributions that he has not only given to the City of Philadelphia but to music lovers everywhere.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this Resolution be presented to the family of Teddy Pendergrass, further evidencing the sincere respect and admiration of this legislative body.