

City of Philadelphia



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

(Resolution No. 250508)

RESOLUTION

Honoring the life and legacy of the Reverend Gus Roman, a faithful servant of both the gospel and the people, for his legacy of uplifting Philadelphians, and for his unwavering commitment to civil rights locally and abroad.

WHEREAS, Born on December 20th, 1932, in New Orleans, Louisiana, Reverend Roman served in the United States Army and earned undergraduate and graduate degrees at Virginia Union University and Howard University, respectively; and

WHEREAS, After serving as a Chaplain in the military, a community organization specialist at Howard University, and the Pastor of First Baptist Church in Baltimore, Reverend Roman moved to Cheltenham Township and became the leader of Canaan Baptist Church in Germantown in 1967; and

WHEREAS, Canaan Baptist flourished under Reverend Roman's leadership, with membership growing from 150 to 850. He oversaw Canaan Baptist's expansion and relocation to its current location in 1972; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Roman quickly became a leader in the local civil rights movement and a close confidant of another local luminary, Reverend Dr. Leon H. Sullivan; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Roman was instrumental in helping Reverend Dr. Sullivan develop the National Economic Development Training Program and expand the Opportunities Industrial Center (OIC), a vocational, educational, and life skills training program designed to help young people find and thrive in full-time careers. He served in various roles including as National Director for Community Mobilization for OIC of America; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Roman was later named chair of the board for OIC International, as well as the president of the Lott Carey Foreign Mission Convention from 1997-2000. Under Reverend Roman's leadership, OIC International expanded to 12 job-training centers across Africa; and

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 250508 continued

WHEREAS, Reverend Roman tirelessly worked to end the scourge of apartheid in South Africa; and

WHEREAS, After serving as Pastor of Berean Missionary Baptist Church in Brooklyn, New York, in the 1980s, Reverend Roman returned to Philadelphia in 1988 to succeed Reverend Dr. Sullivan as Pastor at Zion Baptist Church before returning to Canaan Baptist in 1993; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Roman led Canaan Baptist until his initial retirement in 2006. As a lifelong leader, he continued to serve the communities he loved. Reverend Roman later returned to Zion Baptist as a Senior Pastor, and recently called, along with other leaders of the Black Clergy of Philadelphia and Vicinity, for a citywide prayer service in the wake of the 2024 election; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Roman passed away May 4, 2025, but his legacy of family, faith, and service continues to live on. He is survived by his loving family, including his wife Eunice Matthews and their five children: Marcus, Derrick, Jeffrey, Jonai, and Shauna. He will also be lovingly remembered by his sister, two brothers, five grandchildren, two great-grandchildren and other family members; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby honors the life and legacy of the Reverend Gus Roman, a faithful servant of both the gospel and the people, for his legacy of uplifting Philadelphians, and for his unwavering commitment to civil rights locally and abroad.

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 250508 continued

CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the eighth day of May, 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, Brooks, Driscoll and Bass