

City of Philadelphia



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

(Resolution No. 260649)

RESOLUTION

Honoring the life, legacy, and memory of Dito van Reigersberg, the theater artist, accomplished singer, cabaret star, and incomparable Philadelphia drag queen who performed as Martha Graham Cracker, on the occasion of his passing.

WHEREAS, Dito van Reigersberg was a trailblazing, unapologetic, celebratory queer artist whose drag persona, Martha Graham Cracker, not only defined and shaped the drag scene in Philadelphia, but transformed the entire arts community over decades; and

WHEREAS, Dito van Reigersberg passed away after a battle with cancer and complications from a bone marrow transplant, on the first day of Pride Month, just as the City skyline and bridges lit up in rainbow colors to celebrate Pride. He is survived by his husband Matthew Neenan, his mother Stephanie van Reigersberg, his sister Alexia and nephews Luke and Eli Bastiaansen, extended family, and countless friends, colleagues, artistic collaborators, chosen family and loved ones; and

WHEREAS, Dito van Reigersberg moved to Philadelphia shortly after graduating Swarthmore College in 1994, and a year after cofounded Pig Iron Theatre Company, a distinguished experimental theater and school focused on interdisciplinary theater and boundary-pushing performance art. In 1999, his drag persona Martha Graham Cracker was born, “the tallest, hairiest drag queen in the world;” and

WHEREAS, For over 25 years, Martha Graham Cracker graced Philadelphia’s stages with her incomparable singing voice backed by a top-notch band, and her gift for bringing joy and a special ability to make everyone in the room feel seen and loved. The Martha Graham Cracker Cabaret Band performed at L’Etage in Queen Village for 15 years, and frequently collaborated with various organizations including the Philadelphia Orchestra, Opera Philadelphia, and the Bearded Ladies Cabaret; and

WHEREAS, Dito embodied what it meant to be an artist standing in their full truth and lifting others as he leads. When he got pushback for his drag performances, he expressed that “Drag connects us to pride, to each other, and to our humanity. It upends the norms of gender and

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allows for us to push at the limits of our ordinary lives. It tells people that it's OK to be unusual, giving visibility to people who might feel unseen and creating a precious sense of community, of shared playfulness and joy;"; and

WHEREAS, Dito's legacy is embodied in the many lives he touched. A loving avalanche of posts from friends, family, collaborators and organizations have shared the impact he had on them and their art. He had an "incomparable spirit, creative spark, and irreverent humor," and an incredible "ability to hold both things at one – on the one hand: virtuosity, experimentalism, danger; on the other: welcoming, pleasure, humor, joy;" now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby honors the life, legacy, and memory of Dito van Reigersberg, the theater artist, cabaret star, and incomparable Philadelphia drag queen who performed as Martha Graham Cracker, on the occasion of his passing.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this Resolution shall be presented to Dito van Reigersberg's family as evidence of the sincere respect, gratitude, and admiration of this legislative body.

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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 eleventh day of June, 2026.

Kenyatta Johnson
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Elizabeth McCollum
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Landau

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Landau, Phillips, Gilmore Richardson,
Gauthier, Lozada, Brooks, O'Rourke, Squilla and Ahmad