



City of Philadelphia

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

BILL NO. 221016

Introduced December 15, 2022

**Councilmembers Johnson, Bass, Gauthier, Driscoll, Gilmore Richardson,
Vaughn, Oh, Brooks and Thomas**

**Referred to the
Committee on Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs**

AN ORDINANCE

Naming and designating the Chew Playground basketball courts, located at 1800 Washington Avenue, the “Rasual Butler Basketball Courts,” in honor of Point Breeze native Rasual Butler, who distinguished himself over a 14-year NBA career, most notably with the Miami Heat.

WHEREAS, Rasual Butler, born as Felix Rasual Cheeseborough, grew up in South Philadelphia, where he was raised in a tight-knit extended family. His grandparents owned a grocery store on Point Breeze Avenue, where he started working as soon as he was old enough to help out; and

WHEREAS, Butler’s love of basketball began from a young age, on the basketball courts at Chew Playground, which are to be renamed in his honor. He went on to participate in the Sonny Hill Community Involvement League, Philadelphia’s storied amateur summer basketball organization, founded in 1968 as a safe haven from the streets; and

WHEREAS, Butler starred for his Roman Catholic High School team and his obvious talents blossomed in his senior year, when he averaged 26.7 points per game. He was named to the All-Catholic and All-City teams and recognized nationally as a third-team *Parade* All-American . Butler was hotly recruited by Kentucky, Connecticut, Syracuse, and Providence, before settling on La Salle to stay close to home; and

WHEREAS, Butler played his college career with the La Salle Explorers. He became the sixth Explorer to score over 2,000 points. He was recognized for his talent and named to the First Team All-Atlantic 10 and was selected to the Verizon Atlantic 10 Men's Basketball Championship All-Tournament team in 2002. He was inducted into the La Salle Hall of Athletes in 2008, where at the time of his induction he ranked fourth among the Explorers’ all-time scorers; and

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WHEREAS, Butler starred at both Roman Catholic and La Salle with Donnie Carr, whom he first met as boy on the basketball courts at Chew Playground. Carr recalls:

"He was an underdog. You can find guys that were more talented than Rasual, but in terms of work ethic, heart, dedication, he had the elite work ethic of a Kobe or LeBron. Nobody thought he was going to be that good of a basketball player. That was his motivation to become the best."

Carr, now an assistant coach at La Salle, still keeps Butler's Explorers and Heat jerseys framed on his wall as a testament to the lasting impact Butler had on his life; and

WHEREAS, In the 2002 NBA draft, Butler was selected by the Miami Heat with the 53rd pick. Butler played three seasons with the Heat as a valued contributor alongside legends Shaquille O'Neal and Dwyane Wade. Butler was then traded to the New Orleans Hornets as part of the largest trade in NBA history. The four-team trade involved the Memphis Grizzlies, Miami Heat, Boston Celtics, and Utah Jazz, and featured 13 players, most notably Eddie Jones, Antoine Walker, Jason Williams, and James Posey; and

WHEREAS, Butler distinguished himself for longevity, building a 14-year NBA career, playing not only for the Heat and the Hornets but also for the Los Angeles Clippers, Chicago Bulls, Toronto Raptors, Indiana Pacers, Washington Wizards and San Antonio Spurs; and

WHEREAS, When he was with the Clippers in 2009-10, Butler notched career highs in minutes per game, scoring and three-pointers; his 145 threes set a team record; and

WHEREAS, On January 31, 2018, Butler and his girlfriend, singer Leah LaBelle, were tragically killed instantly in a car accident in Los Angeles, California. Butler is survived by his daughter Raven Butler-Morris; and

WHEREAS, Butler was a beloved member of the Point Breeze community and the Philadelphia basketball community, whose outstanding career began at Chew Playground and is deserving of commemoration via naming of the Chew basketball courts; now, therefore

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA HEREBY ORDAINS:

The Chew Playground Basketball Courts located at 1800 Washington Avenue is hereby named and designated the "Rasual Butler Basketball Courts," in honor of Point Breeze native Rasual Butler, who distinguished himself over a 14-year NBA career, most notably with the Miami Heat.