

# City of Philadelphia



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

(Resolution No. 250159)

## RESOLUTION

Honoring the life and legacy of Tyrone Smith, longtime community leader and champion for the Black LGBTQ+ Community in Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, Tyrone Smith was born in Kingston, North Carolina in 1942. His family later moved to Philadelphia. He graduated from Benjamin Franklin High School in 1968, and subsequently worked for Keebler Baking Company and served as a lab technician for thirteen years; and

WHEREAS, Tyrone left Keebler in the early 1980's around the time the AIDS and HIV had begun to devastate the lives of Black gay men in Philadelphia. Tyrone joined the Philadelphia AIDS Task Force, where he began to advocate for the health of Black gay men, when there were no other champions for education and support to protect Black gay men from AIDS and HIV; and

WHEREAS, Tyrone established Unity, Inc., the City's first organization established by and for Black gay men. Tyrone served as executive director of Unity for thirteen years, during which time he ushered in some of the most progressive policies and programs for Black gay men in the City's history; and

WHEREAS, Tyrone Smith co-founded Philadelphia's Black Gay Men's Leadership Council in 2005. The Black Gay Men's Leadership Council mission is to cultivate education, advocacy, and community collaborations to further empower Philadelphia's diverse communities of Black gay men. The primary focus is to nurture their political and social advancements, wellness needs, and health to better help their development and transition into the next generation of regional, national and local leaders; and

WHEREAS, Tyrone has built a legacy as one of Philadelphia's fiercest advocates for Black gay men. His legacy will remain as a passionate activist to ensure rights for the City's LGBTQ+ communities and provider of services to the City's most vulnerable residents. As one of the first Black Gay male activists to create alliances with Philadelphia political and faith leaders, and as a

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leader who connected with many of the City's white institutions that initially did not recognize or address the struggles facing Black gay men, he will be remembered as a bridge builder; and WHEREAS, In December 2024, Tyrone Smith was awarded the Living Legacy Award and inducted into Councilmember Rue Landau's LGBTQ+ Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, Tyrone Smith passed away on Tuesday, February 18<sup>th</sup> at the age of 82. He was a longtime mentor, prominent LGBTQ+ activist and community organizer, and a true vessel of Black Philadelphia history, and will be truly loved and missed; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby honors the life and legacy of Tyrone Smith, longtime community leader and champion for the Black LGBTQ+ Community in Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Tyrone Smith, as evidence of the sincere sentiments 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 twenty seventh day of February, 2025

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, O'Rourke, Driscoll, Squilla and Ahmad