

City of Philadelphia



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

(Resolution No. 250023)

RESOLUTION

Congratulating the Temple University men's basketball team for winning their 2,000th game.

WHEREAS, The Temple University men's basketball team, the sixth winningest NCAA Division I men's collegiate basketball program of all time, is the flagship athletic program of the university. The Temple Owls have won thirty conference championships, thirty three NCAA Tournament appearances; seven Sweet Sixteen appearances; eight Elite Eight appearances; two Final Four appearances; and were the inaugural winners of the 1938 National Invitational Tournament (NIT); and

WHEREAS, A quarter of these victories, 516 to be exact, came under the leadership of Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame coach John Chaney, who led the Owls from 1982 to 2006. Chaney coached only one losing season during his over two decades as head coach, winning ten A-10 conference championships, making seventeen NCAA tournaments, and appearing in the Elite Eight five times; and

WHEREAS, John Chaney was the architect of a matchup zone defense that stymied opposing offenses for decades. He became known for life lessons, tough nonconference scheduling, and his infamous 5:30 a.m. practices. He was a blunt, unapologetic, tough coach who demanded excellence on and off the court; and

WHEREAS, The Temple Owls are a staple program of the Philadelphia Big 5 association of men's college basketball programs in Philadelphia, with twenty eight Big 5 titles to their name, second most in the Big 5 behind only Villanova; and

WHEREAS, Temple's first basketball victory came against the Purple Crescent Athletic Club in 1894, marking the start of the Owls campaign to becoming one of the greatest schools in men's college basketball history; and

WHEREAS, In 1938, Temple won the first-ever national championship, defeating Colorado 60-36 in the NIT, the forerunner of the NCAA tournament that started a year later. They were led by head coach James Usilton, who won 205 games while at Temple; and

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WHEREAS, The program clinched their 500th win in a victory against rival Big 5 rival La Salle 47-43 under head coach Josh Cody in the 1940s. Several players on this team would go on to be enshrined in the Temple University Basketball Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, One of the notable players from Coach Usilton's tenure at Temple was "The Chief" Harry Litwack, who would begin coaching the men's basketball team in 1952. Litwack won 373 games as the Owls coach, leading the team to two Final Four appearances in 1956 and 1958, and earning the school another NIT championship in 1969 in a Cinderella upset over NBA Hall of Famer Bob Cousy-coached Boston College. Litwack would become the first Temple Owl to enter the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, The Litwack years coincide with the start of the Big 5 games where many of Philadelphia's long-standing rivalries were contested at the historic Palestra, often featuring doubleheaders with fierce competition and heart-stopping thrills; and

WHEREAS, Don Casey took over as the Owls head coach in 1973 and he guided the team to 151 wins, making three NIT appearances and one NCAA tournament appearance. During his tenure, the Owls achieved their 1,000th win in program history with a 55-43 victory against Big 5 rival Drexel; and

WHEREAS, Temple became a powerhouse under coach Chaney in the 1980s. In 1984, his Temple Owls faced the Michael Jordan-led UNC Tarheels in the Round of 32, in a losing effort. In 1988, Temple finished 32-2, earning the #1 seed for the best record in the country. That year, the Owls beat top schools like Villanova, North Carolina, UCLA, West Virginia, and Georgetown before losing to Duke in the 1988 Elite Eight; and

WHEREAS, The 1993 Temple Owls made another Elite Eight run led by future NBA stars Eddie Jones and Aaron McKie, losing to the star-studded Michigan Fab Five. Throughout the 1990s, Temple consistently produced NBA-level talent and earned wins over marquee programs including Villanova and Kansas; and

WHEREAS, The early 2000s included notable wins over #1 Cincinnati and a thrilling comeback victory over Big 5 rival St. Joseph's at The Palestra. Temple consistently made NCAA tournament appearances throughout this time and were a frequent Cinderella team; and

WHEREAS, "Mr. Big 5" Fran Dunphy took over the program in 2006 following John Chaney's retirement, adding 270 wins during his 13-year tenure as Temple's coach that included three straight A-10 tournament championships, eight NCAA Tournament appearances, and wins over nationally ranked Duke, Kansas, Villanova, Syracuse, UConn, Florida State, West Virginia, Tennessee, Xavier, and Georgetown; and

WHEREAS, From 2019 to 2023, former Temple star Aaron McKie served as head coach of the Owls. Temple shocked the world in 2023 when they upset #1 Houston 56-55, adding yet another

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shocker to the decades of gritty underdog victories that the Philadelphia school has secured against the elites of college basketball; and

WHEREAS, The Temple Owls joined blue chip programs Duke, Kansas, Kentucky, UCLA, and UNC as the only men's college basketball programs to win 2,000 games in a thrilling 62-61 comeback victory over Davidson College on December 18, 2024; and

WHEREAS, As Philadelphia's largest public university, Temple University instills a deep sense of pride in all those who cheer on its legendary basketball team. As the cherry and white march towards another 2,000 victories, let us recognize and celebrate the cherished history of the Temple Owls and their countless successes on the hardwood; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby congratulates the Temple University men's basketball team for winning their 2,000th game.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the Temple University men's basketball team as evidence of the true and sincere admiration and respect 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-third day of January, 2025.

Kenyatta Johnson
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Elizabeth McCollum
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Young

Sponsored by: Council President Johnson, Councilmembers Young, Ahmad, Bass, Brooks, Driscoll, Gauthier, Gilmore Richardson, Harrity, Jones, Landau, Lozada, O'Neill, O'Rourke, Phillips, Squilla and Thomas