

City of Philadelphia



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

(Resolution No. 250287)

RESOLUTION

Recognizing and honoring Dr. Arlene Parsons Bennett for her contributions to the City as a prominent community organizer and the first Black woman to graduate from the University of Pennsylvania's medical school, on the occasion of Women's History Month.

WHEREAS, Dr. Arlene Parsons Bennett attended the University of Pennsylvania medical school from 1960 to 1964, a period fraught with racial tensions, and overcame other barriers to get where she is today as one of only six women in her class and someone who enlisted in the military to afford college; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Bennett is a born and raised Philadelphian, a graduate of Philadelphia Girls High School, and a resident of the Mt. Airy community for almost 50 years. Dr. Bennett has made significant contributions to the field of medicine and to the City of Philadelphia as the first Black woman to graduate from the University of Pennsylvania's School of Medicine, breaking barriers and paving the way for future generations of Black women in the medical profession; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Bennett initially worked as a pediatrician for over a decade, but recognizing the need for additional support for patients with mental health conditions like depression, bipolar disorders, and schizophrenia, Dr. Bennett made the shift to psychiatric work, where she opened her own private practice in July 1977; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Bennett dedicated her life to serving the City of Philadelphia and improving the state of mental healthcare in the City through her career as a psychiatrist focused on providing long-term quality care to patients and by volunteering as a Clinical Associate for the Department of Psychiatry at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania for almost 25 years, where she was recognized for her notable achievements for supporting students and other doctors with her extensive knowledge; and

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WHEREAS, Outside of her outstanding medical career and accomplishments, Dr. Bennett is a prominent member in her community as Treasurer for the Wissahickon East Project whose persistent efforts over 20 years helped revitalize the Wissahickon East and add it to the Philadelphia Parks and Recreation system to continually protect the City's greenspaces. Dr. Bennett also co-chaired the Gowen Estate House Tour Steering Committee to preserve and share the history of the Gowen Estate and the City with buildings dating back to the late 1800s; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia has long been a hub for innovation, education, and leadership, and Dr. Bennett's achievements and contributions are a testament to the values of perseverance, excellence, and determination that define the spirit of the City; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby recognizes Dr. Arlene Bennett for Women's History Month to honor her groundbreaking accomplishments, her dedication to improving healthcare in Philadelphia, her role in paving the way for future generations of Black women in medicine, and her efforts to preserve and improve her community and the City overall; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, In honoring Dr. Bennett's legacy, the City of Philadelphia recognizes the achievements of underrepresented groups in supporting the reputable healthcare system the City has today and uplifting communities of color who often suffer disproportionately from adverse health conditions and environmental racism.

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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 March, 2025.

Kenyatta Johnson
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Elizabeth McCollum
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Ahmad

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Ahamad, Phillips, Landau, Lozada, Brooks,
O'Rourke, Driscoll, Squilla and Bass