

City of Philadelphia



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

(Resolution No. 250157)

RESOLUTION

Renaming the 2000 block of N 59th Street “Will Smith Way” to honor and celebrate the impactful career and legacy of Will Smith, a West Philadelphia native.

WHEREAS, Will Smith is a renowned actor, producer, and philanthropist whose career has spanned over three decades, making a significant impact on the entertainment industry and global culture, and is widely celebrated for his performances in television, film, and music, as well as his charitable contributions and advocacy for social justice and equality; and

WHEREAS, Will Smith was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on September 25, 1968. He spent his formative years in the Wynnefield section of West Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Smith's early life in Philadelphia played a foundational role in shaping the values and work ethic that would define his career. Growing up in a close-knit, working-class community in West Philadelphia, Smith attended Overbrook High School, where he began to hone his creativity and entrepreneurial spirit, qualities that would later define his remarkable career in entertainment; and

WHEREAS, Smith's rise to fame began in Philadelphia during the late 1980s when he entered the music industry as part of the rap duo DJ Jazzy Jeff & The Fresh Prince alongside his childhood friend, Jeff Townes (DJ Jazzy Jeff). Their single "Parents Just Don't Understand" earned them the first-ever Grammy Award for Best Rap Performance in 1989. This groundbreaking achievement was a defining moment in hip-hop history and put Smith on the map as a rising star in the entertainment world; and

WHEREAS, In 1990, he transitioned into acting and achieved his breakout role as the lead character in the hit television series *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*. Although the show was set in Los Angeles, its origins were rooted in Will's upbringing in West Philadelphia, and much of the

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humor, energy, and themes of the show reflected Smith's life experiences in the City. This series not only made him a household name but also established him as a cultural icon, beloved by fans worldwide. His portrayal of an inner-city teenager who moves to a wealthy California neighborhood resonated deeply with audiences and served as a positive representation of urban youth; and

WHEREAS, Will Smith has achieved extraordinary success in his career, earning numerous accolades including two Academy Award nominations, four Grammy Awards, and the honor of being one of the highest-grossing actors in Hollywood, with iconic roles in beloved films such as *The Pursuit of Happyness*, *Men in Black*, *Ali*, *Bad Boys*, and *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* television series, among many others; and

WHEREAS, Will Smith's influence extends beyond his professional achievements, as he has used his platform to advocate for issues of social justice, mental health awareness, education, and youth empowerment, including significant donations and involvement in organizations such as the *Boys & Girls Clubs of America*, *The Smith Family Foundation*, and other programs dedicated to lifting up underserved communities; and

WHEREAS, Will Smith's deep love for his hometown of Philadelphia has been evident throughout his career. He has frequently referenced his roots in the City, serving as a proud ambassador for Philadelphia in national and international arenas. His legacy is deeply intertwined with the culture, spirit, and people of this City, which he continues to represent with pride and honor; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia has benefited from Will Smith's continued success, which has brought global attention to the City and its vibrant cultural scene. Smith has frequently showcased his love for Philadelphia, often referencing it in interviews, social media posts, and even in his work. His impact on the City extends beyond entertainment, as he has helped raise the profile of Philadelphia as a hub for creative talent and a place where great things are possible; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby proposes the renaming of the 2000 block of N 59th Street to "Will Smith Way" to honor his legacy and lasting impact on the City of Philadelphia, the nation, and the world.

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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 sixth day of March, 2025.

Kenyatta Johnson
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Elizabeth McCollum
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Jones

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