

City of Philadelphia



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

(Resolution No. 230658)

RESOLUTION

Honoring and commemorating the extraordinary life and legacy of Temple University President JoAnne A. Epps.

WHEREAS, Long-time Temple force for good JoAnne Epps' sudden passing on September 19, 2023, shocked and saddened, not only the Temple community but everyone who had the opportunity to know her; and

WHEREAS, Remembered for her calming yet commanding leadership, President Epps spent the last 40 years of her career with Temple, serving first as a Law Professor, then Dean of the Law School; then from 2016 to 2021, she served as the Executive Vice President and Provost of Temple University; and

WHEREAS, In April 2023, Epps was voted unanimously by the Board of Trustees to serve as acting President to lead the University during a time of immense transition, and is now posthumously named as a full-fledged President; and

WHEREAS, During her time as Dean of Temple's Beasley School of Law from 2008 to 2016, she was an outspoken advocate for legal education that emphasized institutional responsiveness over a one-size-fits-all curricular model; and

WHEREAS, Under Epps, the law school surged in national rankings, moving into the *U.S. News and World Report Top 50*; expanded its experiential offerings; and significantly enhanced its business and transactional law curriculum, while retaining its status as a national leader in trial advocacy. Epps also championed the creation of the Stephen and Sandra Sheller Center for Social Justice at Temple Law School, which has become a hub for social justice inquiry and advocacy in the City of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, As a result of her transformational tenure, Epps was named one of the top 10 most influential people in legal education by *The National Jurist* for five consecutive years; and

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 230658 continued

WHEREAS, Outside of the classroom, Epps put her legal acumen to work in the service of criminal justice reform. In 2001, Philadelphia Mayor John Street appointed her to serve as Chair of the Mayor's Task Force on Police Discipline. From 2015 to 2017, she was the Inaugural Chair of Philadelphia's Police Oversight Board, formed in response to a Justice Department report regarding Philadelphia police shootings; and

WHEREAS, From 2011 to 2019, Epps was appointed by the United States District Court to serve as monitor of the City of Philadelphia's compliance with the settlement of *Bailey v. City of Philadelphia*, a cases that challenged the City's stop-and-frisk procedures; and

WHEREAS, Not limiting herself to change in Philadelphia, she was a member of the Pennsylvania Judicial Independence Commission; the Philadelphia Bar Association's Committee to Promote Fairness in the Judiciary; the Pennsylvania Commission for Justice Initiatives; the Advisory Council for the Pennsylvania Prison Society; and the Advisory Board of the Public Interest Law Center. She became an Officer of the Pennsylvania Women's Forum in 2010, becoming its President in 2013. Fittingly so, then-Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett named Epps a Distinguished Daughter of Pennsylvania in 2012; and

WHEREAS, She served in numerous leadership roles that promoted women and minorities in the legal field including the American Bar Association, the National Association of Women Lawyers and the American Law Institute affiliate, ALI-ABA; and

WHEREAS, Epps received a 2015 Spirit of Excellence Award by the American Bar Association, the 2015 M. Ashley Dickerson Award by the National Association of Women Lawyers, and the 2014 Justice Sonia Sotomayor Diversity Award by the Philadelphia Bar Association; and

WHEREAS, Epps was also a three-time honoree for *Lawyers of Color Magazine* as one of the 100 most influential Black lawyers in the country. In 2009, the Philadelphia Bar Association honored her with the Sandra Day O'Connor Award, conferred annually on "a woman attorney who has demonstrated superior legal talent, achieved significant legal accomplishments and has furthered the advancement of women in both the profession and the community"; and

WHEREAS, Epps received her B.A. from Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut in 1973 and was a 1976 graduate of Yale Law School. Before teaching at Temple, Epps was an assistant U.S. Attorney in Philadelphia and Deputy City Attorney in Los Angeles; and

WHEREAS, President Epps will be remembered for her steadfast service to the Temple Community, the City of Philadelphia and the State of Pennsylvania; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Honoring and commemorating the extraordinary life and legacy of Temple University President JoAnne A. Epps.

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 230658 continued

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 230658 continued

CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the twenty eighth day of September, 2023.

Darrell L. Clarke
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Michael A. Decker
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Jones for Council President Clarke

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