

# City of Philadelphia



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

(Resolution No. 070706)

## RESOLUTION

Recognizing Eden Cemetery, America's oldest African American public cemetery company, located in Collingdale, Pennsylvania.

WHEREAS, Eden Cemetery was founded in 1902 on a fifty-three acre plot selected because of its proximity to Philadelphia, beautiful landscape, size and availability; and

WHEREAS, Establishing a unified African American cemetery was the vision of Jerome Bacon, a teacher at the Institute for Colored Youth on Bainbridge Street near Ninth Street in Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Bacon founded the cemetery with J.C. Asbury, Daniel W. Parvis, Martin Lehmann and Charles Jones to provide a place for remains from condemned cemeteries in Philadelphia and to also provide a future resting place for African Americans; and

WHEREAS, The first person buried in Eden was Celestine Cromwell, wife of Willis Cromwell, an advisory member to the cemetery. The burial took place August 12, 1902 after dark to protect the ceremony from white residents who, the day before, had protested the interment of African Americans in their community; and

WHEREAS, Having learned that Lebanon Cemetery, located on Passyunk Avenue near Ninth Street in Philadelphia, had been condemned, Bacon and Eden's board members worked with the cemetery's president to re-inter all remains in Eden; and

WHEREAS, In the spring of 1903, the remains from the Stephen Smith Home Cemetery, located at Forty-sixth Street and Merion were interred in Eden. And, in 1923, the remains from Olive Cemetery, which was adjacent to the Stephen Smith Home, were also buried in Eden Cemetery; and

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WHEREAS, Today, there are over 80,000 interred in Eden Cemetery in 23 sections whose names honor various civil rights leaders and the deceased from cemeteries moved to Eden; and

WHEREAS, Eden Cemetery is on the Historical Register and is the resting place of hundreds of prominent national and local Philadelphian African Americans including: Amos Scott, First Magistrate for Philadelphia; Chris J. Perry, Founder of The Philadelphia Tribune; Dr. Caroline Still-Anderson, Philadelphia's first black female Physician; Ms. Caroline Lecound, Principal of O.V. Catto School; Marian Anderson, Renowned Opera Singer; Frances Ellen-Watkins Harper, known as "The Bronze Muse," and considered to be the first black woman to make a living from writing; and

WHEREAS, In addition to these prominent African Americans, it is speculated that Octavius Valentine Catto, a Philadelphia civil rights leader in the 1800s, is buried at Eden Cemetery. Catto, whose involvement as a leading advocate for African American participation in the political process—registering thousands of African Americans and encouraging them to vote—was shot twice in the back on election day just steps from his home at Eighth and South Streets; now therefore

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Council does hereby recognize Eden Cemetery, America's oldest African American public cemetery company, located in Collingdale, Pennsylvania.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Eden Cemetery's president, Albert F. Campbell, and board members as a token of evidence of this legislative body's sincere appreciation for their contributions to the City.

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*RESOLUTION NO. 070706 continued*

CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the twentieth of September, 2007.

Anna C. Verna  
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Patricia Rafferty  
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Kenney

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Kenney, Goode, Savage, Greenlee, Clarke, Reynolds Brown, DiCicco, Rizzo, Tasco, Campbell and O'Neill