

City of Philadelphia



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

(Resolution No. 260093)

RESOLUTION

Honoring and recognizing Mercy-Douglass Hospital as the first Black hospital in Philadelphia and commemorating the enduring legacy of its founder, Dr. Nathan Francis Mossell and his commitment to advancing health equity and medical excellence.

WHEREAS, Frederick Douglass Memorial Hospital was founded in 1895 as an institution dedicated to serving Black Philadelphians during an era of racial segregation and exclusion from mainstream medical facilities; and

WHEREAS, Mercy-Douglass Hospital was founded by Nathan Francis Mossell, a pioneering physician, civil rights advocate, and the first African American graduate of the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine; and

WHEREAS, After over 50 years of service and expansion, Frederick Douglass Memorial Hospital merged with Mercy Hospital to form Mercy-Douglass Hospital, which operated from 1948 to 1973; and

WHEREAS, Mercy-Douglass Hospital stood as the first Black hospital in Philadelphia and the second Black hospital in the United States, created to provide high-quality medical care, professional training, and dignified treatment to African American patients who were systematically denied access to equitable health services; and

WHEREAS, Mercy-Douglass Hospital played a critical role in educating and training generations of Black physicians, nurses, and health professionals through its School of Nursing, thereby expanding opportunities for Black excellence and leadership in the medical field; and

WHEREAS, Mercy-Douglass Hospital was instrumental in addressing health disparities and advocating for patient-centered care, laying the foundation for modern efforts to promote health equity, culturally competent medicine, and community-based health services; and

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 260093 continued

WHEREAS, The hospital's legacy reflects the resilience, determination, and collective action of Black Philadelphians who built institutions to protect and uplift their communities in the face of systemic barriers; and

WHEREAS, Despite its closure in 1973, the impact of Mercy-Douglass Hospital continues to be felt through the professionals it trained, the patients it served, and the standards of care it established; and

WHEREAS, Preserving and honoring the history of Mercy-Douglass Hospital and the legacy of its illustrious founder Dr. Nathan Francis Mossell, is essential to understanding Philadelphia's medical heritage and to inspiring future generations to pursue equity, service, and excellence in health care; and

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby honors and commemorates Dr. Nathan Francis Mossell, the first Black graduate of the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, and founder of Mercy-Douglass Hospital- the first Black hospital in Philadelphia and the second in the nation, and recognizes the profound contributions to medical education and community health of both the institution and its founder, and affirms the enduring role of this history in advancing health equity and opportunity for all Philadelphians.

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 260093 continued

CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the fifth day of February, 2026.

Kenyatta Johnson
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Elizabeth McCollum
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Ahmad

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