

# City of Philadelphia



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

(Resolution No. 260223)

## RESOLUTION

Designating March 8, 2026, as “Joe Frazier Day” in the City of Philadelphia in celebration and recognition of the 55th anniversary of the “Fight of the Century”, in which Philadelphia icon “Smokin’” Joe Frazier defeated Muhammad Ali to win the world heavyweight championship title.

WHEREAS, Joe Frazier was born in Beaufort, South Carolina on January 12, 1944, and relocated to Philadelphia at the age of 15 when he fell in love with the sport of boxing, wanting to follow in the footsteps of his favorite boxer, Joe Louis. He took a job in a slaughterhouse, where he used sides of beef as punching bags to train, which later inspired an acclaimed scene in the film *Rocky*; and

WHEREAS, As an undersized heavyweight, Frazier won three Golden Glove championships in 1962, 1963, and 1964. At the age of 20 he won a gold medal in the 1964 Summer Olympics in Tokyo, defeating bigger opponents with his famous left hook; and

WHEREAS, He turned pro in August 1965 under trainer Yank Durham, who gave him the memorable moniker “Smokin’ Joe,” referring to smoke coming off Frazier’s boxing gloves. Five years later, he beat Jimmy Ellis to win the heavyweight title that he would hold from February 16, 1970, until January 22, 1973; and

WHEREAS, 55 years ago, on March 8, 1971, Frazier fought Muhammad Ali in what became known as the “Fight of the Century”, defeating Ali in the 15th round and handing him the first loss of his professional career after 31 consecutive victories. The “Fight of the Century” marked a historic milestone in professional sports, becoming the first-time athletes were paid millions of dollars; and

WHEREAS, “Fight of the Century” is often regarded as the greatest sporting event of the 20th century. Even though it took place in New York City at Madison Square Garden, its roots are deeply connected to Philadelphia, where Frazier trained just across the Delaware River in Cherry Hill, New Jersey; and

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WHEREAS, The bout captured worldwide attention, drawing over 300 million viewers. It also produced an iconic exchange - when Ali famously taunted Frazier, “Joe, don’t you know I’m God?” to which Frazier replied, “God, you’re in the wrong place tonight”; and

WHEREAS, The historic fight exceeded expectations, lasting the full 15-round championship distance and ending with Joe Frazier winning his title by unanimous decision from the judges; and

WHEREAS, Joe Frazier is widely regarded as one of the greatest boxers in history. His gym in Philadelphia served as a community hub where he mentored countless young fighters and was designated a U.S. National Historic Landmark in 2013. His legacy has inspired generations of Philadelphia fighters to come; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby designates March 8, 2026, as “Joe Frazier Day” in the City of Philadelphia in celebration and recognition of the 55th anniversary of the “Fight of the Century”, in which Philadelphia icon “Smokin” Joe Frazier defeated Muhammad Ali to win the world heavyweight championship title.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this Resolution be presented to the family of Joe Frazier as evidence of the sincere respect and admiration of this legislative body.

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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

Kenyatta Johnson  
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Elizabeth McCollum  
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Harrity

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Harrity, Phillips, Gilmore Richardson, Jones, Lozada, Young, Brooks, O'Rourke, Driscoll, O'Neill, Squilla, Bass and Ahmad