



City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

RESOLUTION NO. 220956

Introduced December 1, 2022

Councilmember Jones

RESOLUTION

Naming the 600 block of N. 66th Street as “John Skief Way,” in honor of John Skief, the founder of the Harambee Institute of Science & Technology Charter School.

WHEREAS, John Skief was born in West Philadelphia in 1948; and

WHEREAS, At fourteen, Skief joined the N.A.A.C.P. Youth Council to address the injustices Black people faced in his community. His commitment to civil rights continued under the tutelage of Cecil B. Moore and his involvement in many demonstrations; and

WHEREAS, Skief wanted to impart authentic cultural knowledge of Africans in the diaspora to children in West Philadelphia and to cultivate a pride in African culture and heritage. To present an accurate depiction of the African people to African American children, Skief documented his travels through the African diaspora and the Caribbean islands; and

WHEREAS, Skief discovered the power of education while working in various youth programs, including the Rights of Passage Program, workshops for Teen Self-Esteem, and Anti-Drug & Violence initiatives. He developed and led Teacher/Staff Development workshops for the Pennsylvania Department of Education that focused on Afrocentric teaching strategies and curriculum design; and

WHEREAS, In 1971, Skief received his degree in education from Cheyney State College and began teaching in the Philadelphia Public School System. He was a leader in the Philadelphia High School restructuring program and the founder of the Community Development Charter at West Philadelphia High School; and

WHEREAS, In 1973, Skief, along with other visionaries, co-founded the Harambee Institute, a community-based cultural and educational institution. Skief served as the Institute’s first director; and

WHEREAS, During his time as the director of the Harambee Institute, Skief developed an in-

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 220956 continued

service course for the Philadelphia School District called “African and African American Contributions to Science and Technology.” This course inspired Skief to found the Harambee Institute of Science & Technology Charter School and lead the school as its first CEO; and

WHEREAS, Skief dedicated his life to community service. He created and directed the African American Festival for the Robin Hood Dell East concerts and was the production manager for the Philadelphia Kwanzaa Expo and African American Parade and Festival. In 1985, Skief organized the Respect Yourself Youth Self-Esteem Program in Philadelphia. He also served as the founding President of the Pennsylvania Alliance of Charter Schools; and

WHEREAS, Skief passed away in 2007 at the age of fifty-nine and was survived by his wife and three children; and

WHEREAS, The legacy and service of John Skief should be honored and commemorated by adding his name to the street signs where the Harambee Institute of Science and Technology is located; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That is hereby also names the 600 block of N. 66th Street as “John Skief Way,” in honor of John Skief, the founder the Harambee Institute of Science & Technology Charter School.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the family of John Skief as a sign of the sincere admiration and respect of this legislative body.