

Legislation Text

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Renaming and designating the property commonly referred to as the Charles Baker Recreation Center, located at 5433 Lansdowne Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania as the “Charles Baker and Carol Baker Rice Recreation Center”.

Whereas, Carol Baker was born on April 11, 1943, in Philadelphia to Charles and Mary Baker. Carol grew up on 55th Street near Master Street in West Philadelphia where every resident was family. Carol attended Philadelphia public schools and graduated from the Philadelphia High School for Girls, class #127 in 1961; and

Whereas, Carol matriculated at Morgan State University in Baltimore. Then, in 1963, Charles Baker, the patriarch of the family and the City of Philadelphia’s Commissioner of Records, suddenly died. Carol transferred to Penn State University where she received a Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science; and

Whereas, In 1964, Carol was initiated into the Delta Gamma Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., a service sorority, at Penn State University. Later, Carol joined the Omega Omega chapter in Philadelphia. She became a Life Member and received the distinguished title of Golden Soror after serving the sisterhood for 50 years. She held several leadership positions in the chapter and served as President of the 1926 Foundation, Inc.; and

Whereas, Working with the Philadelphia Department of Recreation and maintaining leadership roles, enabled Carol to connect with Philadelphia communities over the span of 35 years. Her journey began as a Summer Play Leader with the Philadelphia Department of Recreation. Carol then became the Administrator for The Neighborhood Youth Corp during Philadelphia Mayor James Tate’s tenure. Thereafter, Carol served as the Administrative Officer for the Summer Food Program and Summer Play Streets Program, as well as the Community Outreach Coordinator with summer day camps. Working with anti-poverty programs, training youths in job placements and connecting youth to recreation facilities for employment became one of Carol’s greatest joys; and

Whereas, In 2009, Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter appointed Carol to the then newly-created Commission on Parks and Recreation. She was reappointed in 2012 to serve a second term; and

Whereas, Carol lived her life believing, “To whom much is given, much is required.” From an early age, Carol was active in the church and continued to be active in many leadership capacities, first, at Salem Baptist Church, then at Bethlehem Baptist Church. In addition to her church obligations, Carol served on the Board of Directors of the Southwest Belmont Community Association, as the Vice Chairman of the Executive Board, and as a member of the Annual Founder’s Day Committee. In 2010, she became the Treasurer. Carol also served on the Board of Directors for ASAP (After School Activities Partnership). She served as both Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Warrington Parks and Recreation Board and as a Democratic Committee person for Warrington Township District 6; and

Whereas, on several occasions during 2015 and 2016, the Omega Omega Chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. spearheaded Baker Recreation Center renewals as part of the sorority’s national AKA 1908

Playground ProjectSM, culminating in November 2016, when the City of Philadelphia dedicated a mural of Charles Baker at the Recreation Center. The sorority collaborated with Councilmember Curtis Jones, Jr., of the Fourth Councilmanic District, on these service projects which focused on improving Baker Recreation Center for the community; and

Whereas, Carol served as the Chairman for the AKA 1908 Playground ProjectSM under the Environmental Ownership Target for the bulk of the forementioned Baker events. Carol also served on the Baker Recreation Center Advisory Council to ensure community input; and

Whereas, Carol also served as the Chairman for other AKA 1908 Playground ProjectsSM that were held at Claiborne and Lewis, Marie Dendy and West Mill Creek playgrounds. Carol was always committed to the City of Philadelphia's recreation centers; and

Whereas, Carol leaves behind a beautiful legacy represented by her family and friends. She is survived by her husband of 52 years, John III, her son John IV and a host of relatives, sorority sisters and friends who will forever miss her; and

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA HEREBY ORDAINS:

SECTION 1. The Charles Baker Recreation Center is hereby renamed and dedicated as the "Charles Baker and Carol Baker Rice Recreation Center".

SECTION 2. This Ordinance shall take effect immediately.