

Legislation Text

File #: 180027, **Version:** 0

Also naming Glenwood Avenue from Broad Street to Germantown Avenue as “Smokin’ Joe Frazier Boulevard”.

WHEREAS, Joe Frazier, known to the world as “Smokin’ Joe”, was born on January 12, 1944 in Beaufort, South Carolina, the 12th child of Rubin and Dolly Frazier; and

WHEREAS, During the early 1950s, Smokin’ Joe fell in love with the sport of boxing, dreaming to become as successful as one of his favorite boxers Joe Louis, when his father bought a black and white television where the family and others nearby came to watch boxing matches; and

WHEREAS At age 15, Frazier moved to New York to live with a brother. A year later he moved to Philadelphia, taking a job in a slaughterhouse. At times, he battered sides of beef, using them as a punching bag to work out; and

WHEREAS, During Frazier’s amateur career, he won Golden Glove Heavyweight Championships in 1962, 1963, and 1964. He also captured the Gold Medal at the 1964 Summer Olympics in Tokyo; and

WHEREAS, He turned pro in August 1965, with financial backing from businessmen calling themselves the Cloverlay Group (from cloverleaf, for good luck, and overlay, a betting term signifying good odds). He won his first 11 bouts by knockouts. By winter 1968, his record was 21-0!; and

WHEREAS, Within three years Smokin’ Joe was fighting world-class opposition and in 1970, he beat Jimmy Ellis to win the heavyweight title that he would hold from February 16, 1970, until January 22, 1973 losing to George Forman; and

WHEREAS, Smokin’ Joe became the first American Olympic heavyweight champion to also win the heavyweight title of the world; and

WHEREAS, In 1971, Frazier fought Muhammad Ali in what was called the “Fight of the Century” defeating Ali in the 15th round, resulting in Ali’s first professional loss after 31 wins; and

WHEREAS, In all, Smokin’ Joe won 32 fights, 27 by way of knockout, losing 4 times - twice to Muhammad Ali and twice to George Foreman; and

WHEREAS, Smokin’ Joe was diagnosed with liver cancer in late September 2011 and passed away November 7th of that same year; and

WHEREAS, A Philadelphia legend, Smokin’ Joe Frazier epitomizes the heart of a champion; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Glenwood Avenue from Broad

Street to Germantown Avenue shall be also named as as “Smokin’ Joe Frazier Boulevard”.