

Legislation Text

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Also naming the 700 block of North Broad Street (between Fairmount Avenue and Brown Street) “Rev. Dr. Herbert H. Lusk II Way”, to honor the astounding, Christ-driven legacy of the Senior Pastor of the Greater Exodus Baptist Church and CEO of People for People, Inc.

WHEREAS Herbert H. Lusk II was born in Memphis, TN and spent his teenage years in Monterey, CA, he came to Philadelphia in 1976 when he was drafted by the Philadelphia Eagles as a running back under head coach Dick Vermil; and

WHEREAS As a professional football player, Herb Lusk became the first NFL player to ever kneel and pray in the end zone after scoring a touchdown as a way of giving thanks to God. Because of this faith-filled act, he earned the nickname “The Praying Tailback” ; and

WHEREAS At the height of his playing career, Herb Lusk heeded God’s call and retired from professional football after three seasons with the Eagles to attend seminary, and in 1982 he assumed the pastorate of the Greater Exodus Baptist Church in North Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS Under Rev. Dr. Lusk’s pastoral leadership, Greater Exodus Baptist Church grew from its humble beginnings as a small, debt-crippled congregation to a booming beacon of hope and service to the North Philadelphia community. In 1991, Rev. Dr. Lusk created People for People, Inc. (PFP), a non-profit organization with a mission rooted in breaking “the vicious, generational cycle of poverty in the lives of economically challenged residents of Philadelphia”; and

WHEREAS The mission of PFP as pioneered by Rev. Dr. Lusk is evidenced through the organization’s job training programs; the establishment of the first free and public computer training center in Fairmount/Francisville; Stand for Africa, an organization that helps African children orphaned by HIV/AIDS; the People for People Charter School, a K-12 school serving more than 500 students from across the City; the PFP Early Childhood Development Center; the HOPE Pregnancy Center, a free healthcare clinic and counseling center for pregnant women; the Frederick Douglass Christian School in Chester, PA; Project DAD, a parenting and job placement program for ex-offender fathers; and a community food bank that serves disadvantaged families throughout the City, among many other initiatives; and

WHEREAS Rev. Dr. Lusk’s community advocacy extended beyond the pulpit and the boardroom. He was deeply involved in and committed to the redevelopment and resurgence of the Fairmount/Francisville community. In 2001, Great Exodus Baptist Church acquired the former Traffic Court Building at Broad and Brown Streets. The building was redeveloped under Rev. Dr. Lusk’s leadership and was rededicated as the People for People Charter School. In 2003, Greater Exodus purchased the site of a long-abandoned gas station and auto garage on the triangular property between Ridge and Fairmount Avenues and North 15th Street. The property was then developed in collaboration with Jon Bon Jovi and Project H.O.M.E. and turned into the JBJ Soul Homes, providing housing to low-income individuals; and

WHEREAS Rev. Dr. Lusk retired from the Philadelphia Eagles in the late 1970s, he remained a dedicated

Eagles fan. At the request of then-coach Andy Reid in 2004, he returned to the team as the Lead Chaplain, a role in which he faithfully preached administered to the team and its coaches; and

WHEREAS Rev. Dr. Lusk was a renowned public speaker, a trusted spiritual advisor, and a respected authority in Christian theology. In September 2015, he spoke before a global audience alongside Pope Francis and other dignitaries at the World Meeting of Families, serving as a representative and model citizen of the City of Philadelphia on the international stage. Further, Rev. Dr. Lusk prayed for and provided spiritual guidance to presidents, governors, mayors, and a host of other political leaders. He hosted national political leaders, including two presidents, at Greater Exodus, which allowed community members to connect with those whom they would have otherwise not met; and

WHEREAS On September 19, 2022, Rev. Dr. Herbert H. Lusk II transitioned from this earthly dwelling and received his heavenly reward, weeks shy of his 40th pastoral anniversary. An active member of the Philadelphia community as a leader and the faithful shepherd of the Greater Exodus Baptist Church, Rev. Dr. Lusk's life was marked with service, stewardship, love of others, and chasing after God's own heart, and his legacy will continue; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Name the 700 block of North Broad Street (between Fairmount Avenue and Brown Street) "Rev. Dr. Herbert H. Lusk II Way", to honor the astounding, Christ-driven legacy of the Senior Pastor of the Greater Exodus Baptist Church and CEO of People for People, Inc.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the family of the late Rev. Dr. Herbert H. Lusk II and the Greater Exodus Baptist Church as evidence of the admiration and respect of this body.