

Legislation Text

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Also naming the 2000 Block of East Tulpehocken Street as “Joseph C. Aiken, Sr. Way.”

WHEREAS, Born on July 11, 1936 in Wilberforce, Ohio, where his father attended college, Bishop Joseph C. Aiken, Sr. was the son of the late Rev. George D. Aiken and Lessie E. Aiken; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Aiken was a graduate of Northeast High School and Benjamin Franklin Business School and received an A.S. degree in Christian Education from the Philadelphia College of Bible, a Masters in Christian Education from Grace Theological Seminary, and an honorary Doctorate of Theology from the Biblical Theological Seminary; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Aiken was baptized at the age of thirteen by his father, served as a youth usher, and sang in the church choir, and at seventeen, he and his brothers organized the Welcome Travelers Gospel Singers and sang all over the East Coast, until his divine call to the ministry in 1965 when he was ordained as a Deacon under his father’s ministry and preached his trial sermon in 1966 and then was called to pastor New Salem Baptist Church in 1968 and, on June 12, 1975, Bishop Aiken organized Upper Room Missionary Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Aiken has served in many capacities including but not limited to organizing and coordinating the Upper Room Missionary Baptist Church Medical Center & Pharmacy (1976-1981), President of West Oak Lane Ministerial (1976-1980), Vice Chairman, Board of Evangelism, PA Baptist State Convention (1978- 1986), President of Baptist Ministers Conference of Philadelphia & Vicinity (1983- 1984), Regional Vice President of Eastern Region of PA Baptist State Convention (1987- 1991), Music Director for PA State Convention (1985-1989), Moderator of PA Eastern Keystone Baptist Association (1990-1992), President of Pastor’s Conference of Philadelphia & Vicinity (1999-2000), Coordinator of City Wide Revival (1976-2006), Vice Chairman of City Wide Revival 2007, Board President of the Philadelphia Parent Child Center, Inc., and currently serving as State Director of Home Missions for the PA Baptist State Convention; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Aiken was the recipient of numerous awards and acknowledgments from several entities including the Key to the City of Chester, Martin Luther King Drum Major Award as well as citations from former Governor Ed Rendell, various Philadelphia Mayors, and City Council; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Aiken had a heart for the people of God and poured out his life trying to help others and he was a man with endless contacts who people called because they knew he “Could Make it Happen,” whether it was dealing with property, purchasing a car, or just advice, he would find a way to help those in need. If he could not do it himself, he knew someone who could and, in addition, to his love for the people, he also had a love for barbeque, known notably for his delicious ribs, and finally, he had a zeal for life and love for the people that was felt by all who knew him; and

WHEREAS, A short time ago, Bishop Aiken’s health began to decline, but in illness, his fighting spirit emerged and he continued to defy the odds and move forward, attending church regularly and just recently, celebrating 46 years of ministry and the 36th Anniversary of the Upper Room Missionary Baptist Church on

June 12, 2011 - exactly 36 years from the day the church was organized and, after a job well done, Bishop Joseph C. Aiken, Sr. was called home to be with the Lord on July 5, 2011; and

WHEREAS, Words cannot suffice to describe this “Giant of a Man” who was well known for his frequent sayings including “Make It Happen,” “Don’t Fool Me Now,” and “All is Well,” and he will be missed by his wife of 45 years (Jayne), his seven children (Stella, Gail, Joseph Jr., George, twins Karen and Kevin, Carlton Sr.), Sister, (Marian Garfield), Brother (Gilbert), Sisters-in-law (Deborah Aiken, Linda Spencer, Agnes Tyndall), Brothers-in-law (Robert A. Hill Jr., Adger M. Hill, Donald Hill), Aunts (Catherine Chase, Mary McCants), Five God daughters (Sabriya Jubilee, Naya McCrae, Kimberly Clinkscale, Marieke Neal, Leah Finklea), and a host of grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and cousins in Philadelphia and around the country as well as church members, neighbors, and friends; therefore, be it,

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby honor Bishop Joseph C. Aiken, Sr. by naming the 2000 block of East Tulpehocken Street as “Joseph C. Aiken, Sr. Way.”

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to members of the Aiken family as evidence of the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.