

Legislation Text

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Recognizing and honoring the life and legacy of Joey DeFrancesco.

WHEREAS, Joey DeFrancesco, raised in Philadelphia, was a legendary American multi-instrumentalist, composer, radio personality, and four-time Grammy Award-nominated artist; and

WHEREAS, Blending both traditional and modern musical forms, DeFrancesco was known for his distinctly unique sound which resonated with and reached large audiences; and

WHEREAS, Emerging during the 1980's, a period of decline for Organ jazz, DeFrancesco re-ignited the genre. "He has dominated the instrument and the field as no one of his generation has," says The Chicago Tribune; and

WHEREAS, The four-time Grammy Award-nominated artist earned numerous Jazz Journalist Association awards and other accolades including induction into the inaugural Hammond Organ Hall of Fame in 2014 and the Philadelphia Music Walk of Fame in 2016. DeFrancesco also hosted a weekly program on SiriusXM Radio's Real Jazz channel titled "Organized"; and

WHEREAS, His musical roots stem from his father "Papa" John DeFrancesco, an organist himself, who exposed the younger DeFrancesco to the Philadelphia jazz scene from an early age; and

WHEREAS, DeFrancesco began attending the Settlement Music School at age 9 and was only 10 years old when he played his first professional gig at Gert's Cocktail Lounge on South Street; and

WHEREAS, He later attended the Philadelphia High School for the Creative and Performing Arts where he was the first of his peers to sign a record deal at the age of 17 with Columbia Records following his performance at the first annual Thelonious Monk International Jazz Piano Competition; and

WHEREAS, DeFrancesco became one of the youngest players in Miles Davis's ensemble while still a senior in high school; and

WHEREAS, DeFrancesco released more than thirty albums under his own name and recorded/toured with leading jazz performers such as Ray Charles, Van Morrison, Diana Krall, Nancy Wilson, George Benson, James Moody, John Scofield, Bobby Hutcherson, Jimmy Cobb, John McLaughlin, Larry Coryell, David Sanborn, Miles Davis, Houston Person, John McLaughlin and many others; and

WHEREAS, Most prominently, DeFrancesco was featured in Christian McBride's 2020 release *For Jimmy, Wes and Oliver*, which won the Grammy Award for Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album. He also wrote two recent albums with Grammy Award winning singer-songwriter Van Morrison; and

WHEREAS, Amid his rise to fame, DeFrancesco remained closely associated with his Philadelphia roots, partly due to the organ combo being a rich tradition within the City; and

WHEREAS, Joey DeFrancesco, the driving musical force, passed away on August 25, 2022, at the young age of 51; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby recognizes and honors the life and legacy of Joey DeFrancesco who is remembered for his lasting contributions to Philadelphia's music industry continuing to inspire future generations of musicians to come.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Joey DeFrancesco, further evidencing the sincere admiration and respect of this legislative body.