

Legislation Text

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Honoring the life and achievements of Michael Hinson, Jr., whose art, leadership, and activism established community strongholds for Black and brown LGBTQ youth and led to critical civil rights advancements for LGBTQ people in Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, Michael Hinson was born in Hemingway, South Carolina, the eldest of six children. Michael moved to Philadelphia after graduating high school in the mid 1980's and quickly became an active member of various organizations to support Philadelphians of color living with HIV/AIDS; and

WHEREAS, Michael founded Colours Magazine, a community resource in the early 1990's that provided news about health, technology, music, fashion, and entertainment aimed at intergenerational people of color in the LGBTQ community. The magazine later transformed into the Colours Organization which provided direct services and continued to share information on issues relevant to communities of color through virtual platforms; and

WHEREAS, Hinson was hired by former Mayor John Street to serve as a liaison to LGBTQ communities in 2000 - a position that would lay the foundation for the creation of the Mayor's Office of LGBT Affairs. By 2002, Mike would work with Councilman Frank DiCicco to ensure that gender identity became protected under the City's Fair Practices Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, During his years of steadfast work on behalf of the LGBTQ community, Michael co-founded Philadelphia Black Gay Pride, secured funding to launch the LGBT health clinic at the Mazzone Center, and advised Department of Human Services administrators on local policy changes that led to the establishment of Bethel House, the city's first LGBT housing facility for queer youth; and

WHEREAS, Michael earned a Bachelor of Science in Legal Studies from Peirce College, where he was a W.W. Smith Academic Scholar, a Peirce College Legal Studies Scholar, the Peirce College Academic Leadership Award recipient, and graduated Summa Cum Laude. Additionally, Mike holds a Master of Public Administration from Cheyney University of Pennsylvania, with a concentration in Nonprofit Management, and completed his doctoral coursework at Capella University. Hinson served as an Adjunct Professor at Cheyney University for five years in its Master of Public Administration Program; and

WHEREAS, Hinson became President and Chief Operating Officer of SELF Inc. in 2017 and was named CEO of the organization in the summer of 2022. SELF Inc. is a legacy organization that provides emergency and permanent supportive housing, case management, mentoring, and other vital services and resources for Philadelphia's most vulnerable communities, including people who have issues with mental health or drug use; and

WHEREAS, In his five years working with SELF Inc, Hinson doubled the organization's overall budget while working to relieve the organization of a million dollar debt. SELF expanded the total number of positions during that time, all while the organization was shifting its focus from providing emergency housing to establishing permanent housing solutions for marginalized groups; and

WHEREAS, Hinson also served as co-chair of the City of Philadelphia’s Roadmap to Homes Board and treasurer of the Board of Directors of Philadelphia Family Voices, a Family Legacy Organization; and

WHEREAS, Michael participated in the Million Man March on Washington in the fall of 1995 and characterized the march as a memorable historical march composed of a group of Black men from all walks of life organized together with the chance to listen and talk about the world they wanted to see. Hinson attended the march alongside the International Federation of Black Prides, who organized Black queer men from around the world to attend the event; and

WHEREAS, Hinson had pride in being an “adrenaline junky,” having climbed the Pyramids in Mexico, gone skydiving, and taken on anything that “stops your heart for a minute.” Michael also loved bead-making, particularly Yoruba beads. According to friends, Hinson was “a humble but relentless advocate” who “did so many different kinds of things, and he gave his heart and soul to all of them”; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby honor the life and achievements of Michael Hinson, Jr., whose art, leadership and activism established community strongholds for Black and brown LGBTQ youth and led to critical civil rights advancements for LGBTQ people in Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Michael Hinson, Jr. as an expression of the sincere respect and awe of this legislative body.