

Legislation Text

File #: 180475, **Version:** 0

Also naming South 13th Street, between Walnut and Locust Streets, as “Edie Windsor Way”.

WHEREAS, Edith “Edie” Schlain Windsor was a native Philadelphian, Temple University alumnus, iconic national LGBTQ-rights activist, and whose lawsuit against the federal government is widely regarded to have paved the way for nationwide marriage equality and is among the most important U.S. Supreme Court rulings for LGBTQ rights in American history; and

WHEREAS, Edith Windsor was the lead plaintiff in the landmark 2013 case, *United States v. Windsor*, which led the U.S. Supreme Court to rule the Federal Defense of Marriage Act unconstitutional, and for the first time guaranteed same-sex couples the right to federal recognition and benefits previously accorded to heterosexual spouses; and

WHEREAS, Edith “Edie” Windsor was born in Philadelphia on June 20, 1929, the youngest of three children of James and Celia Schlain, Jewish immigrants from Russia who struggled with poverty during the Great Depression. Her family lost their West Philadelphia candy store and home above, located at the corner of 51st and Malcolm Streets, when it was quarantined after Edith and a brother contracted polio when she was two years old. Edith’s family then moved to the Cobbs Creek Neighborhood of Philadelphia where they remained; and

WHEREAS, A product of the Philadelphia public school system, Edith Windsor successfully received her bachelor’s degree from Temple University in 1950 and in 1957 earned a Master’s Degree in Applied Mathematics from New York University. She also learned computer programming, working for a time on the Univac computer for the Atomic Energy Commission at N.Y.U. She was hired by I.B.M. as a computer programmer in 1958; and

WHEREAS, Edith Windsor had originally gone to court simply to obtain a tax refund on an inheritance left to Edith by her partner of more than 40 years, Thea Spyer, with whom she was legally married in Canada. But for thousands struggling for LGBTQ equality, the stakes went far beyond tax advantages available to married heterosexuals, including Social Security, health care and veterans’ benefits, protection in immigration and bankruptcy cases, and keeping a home after a spouse had died; and

WHEREAS, As a result of her successful U.S. Supreme Court case, Edith Windsor became a national celebrity, a matriarch of the LGBTQ equality movement, and was even a runner-up to Pope Francis for Time Magazine’s ‘Person of the Year’ in 2013. Until her death, Edith Windsor dedicated the remainder of her life in the service of others and the fight for LGBTQ equality for every American; and

WHEREAS, The City wishes to commemorate and honor the legacy of Edie Windsor through the renaming of the 200 Block of South 13th Street in her honor; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the 200 Block of South 13th Street, between Walnut Street and Locust Street in the City of Philadelphia, shall henceforth also be known as

“Edith Windsor Way”.