



City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Legislation Text

File #: 210884, Version: 0

Honoring the life and legacy of Colin L. Powell for his exemplary and outstanding service to the United States as a trailblazing military general, statesman, and public servant.

WHEREAS, Colin L. Powell was born in Harlem, New York City in 1937 to parents Maud Ariel and Luther Theophilus Powell, who worked respectively as a seamstress and shipping clerk; and

WHEREAS, Powell was raised in the South Bronx and worked several jobs to support his family before attending City College of New York in 1958; and

WHEREAS, It was at City College of New York where Powell first entered into the military field through the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program; and

WHEREAS, Powell was commissioned as an Army second lieutenant upon graduation and underwent basic training in Georgia; and

WHEREAS, While the Army was newly desegregated, Powell was refused service in bars and restaurants as a young soldier in the South; and

WHEREAS, Powell served his first tour in Vietnam from 1962 to 1963; his tour was cut short after sustaining injuries from stepping on a hidden explosive; and

WHEREAS, Powell rose through the ranks and returned to Vietnam in 1968 with the rank of major, and served as an assistant chief of staff of operations for the 23rd infantry unit; and

WHEREAS, On this second tour, Powell earned the Soldier's Medal for Bravery after surviving a helicopter crash and pulling three fellow soldiers from the burning wreckage; and

WHEREAS, Following his service in Vietnam, Powell served as a White House fellow during the Nixon administration and continued his education at George Washington University and the National War College; and

WHEREAS, Powell continued to rise through the ranks in the military, serving in various commanding roles and as an assistant to then Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger; and

WHEREAS, Powell was appointed United States Deputy National Security Advisor in 1986 before becoming National Security Advisor to President Reagan in 1987; and

WHEREAS, Under the George H.W. Bush administration, Powell was promoted to four-star general and served as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and

WHEREAS, Powell's decades of heralded military service and leadership led many to consider Powell a likely

candidate to become the Nation's first African American President; and

WHEREAS, Powell declined to run and instead endorsed George W. Bush; and

WHEREAS, Powell was appointed Secretary of State by President Bush in 2001, making history as the first African American to hold the office; and

WHEREAS, Powell served the country through the dark and turbulent times that followed 9/11, guiding American foreign policy in the fight against terrorism; and

WHEREAS, Powell served as Secretary of State through the end of President Bush's first term before retiring in January of 2005; and

WHEREAS, Outside of his military decorations, Powell was twice the recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, as well as the Congressional Gold Medal, Presidential Citizens Medal, and Secretary's Distinguished Service Award; and

WHEREAS, Powell passed away on October 18, 2021 from complications of COVID-19 amid an ongoing battle with blood cancer; and

WHEREAS, Colin Powell was a revered figure by all - regardless of political affiliation - whose trailblazing legacy of service, valor, and leadership will live on for years to come and inspire the next generation of public servants; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby honors the life and legacy of Colin L. Powell for his exemplary and outstanding service to the United States as a trailblazing military general, statesman, and public servant.