

Legislation Text

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Honoring the life and legacy of South Philadelphia Legendary Disc Jockey and Entertainer Jerry Blavat known as "The Geator with the Heater" and "The Boss with the Hot Sauce".

WHEREAS, Gerald "Jerry" Joseph Blavat, *known as* "The Geator with the Heater" and "The Boss with the Hot Sauce", was a Philadelphia icon widely known as one of the early rock-and-roll DJs who revolutionized the profession and developed the "oldies" format; and

WHEREAS, Blavat was born and raised in South Philadelphia, and throughout his childhood, music ran through his veins; and

WHEREAS, As a teenager he would sneak into the "Bandstand", a daily dance show later to become "American Bandstand" with Dick Clark, where he wowed then-host Bob Horn with his dancing skills and musical taste. Producers of the Channel 6 show in Philly discovered their popular dancer was below the age limit, but let him stay to help pick records; and

WHEREAS, When he was 16, he went on the road for the first time, tour managing Philadelphia doo-wop group Danny And The Juniors a year ahead of their breakout hit "At The Hop."; and

WHEREAS, His first break in radio came in the winter of 1960, when he began hosting on Camden's WCAM radio where Blavat became a regular fixture due to his natural talent for knowing what would hit with teens. In his first three years on the air, Blavat moved from WCAM to WFIL, branding his program "The Discophonic Scene" and got it syndicated across the Delaware Valley region cultivating his fan base further to all around the region; and

WHEREAS, Through his radio show, he was an early advocate of music by Black artists that was often marketed to just Black audiences. Where many radio stations played white artists covering songs by Black artists, Blavat played the originals and supported artists like Dionne Warwick and Aretha Franklin early in their career. Blavat's tireless promotion of pioneering Black artists of the 1950s and 1960s shaped the pop music culture of the city; and

WHEREAS, "The Discophonic Scene" eventually became a Bandstand-esque television program on WFIL in Philadelphia from 1965 to 1967. The show helped break the careers of The Four Seasons, The Isley Brothers, and many more. His talent led to a partnership with local record labels Lost Nite and Crimson Records, where he released compilation albums of his favorite songs of the moment, and occasionally recording his own songs; and

WHEREAS, Blavat also appeared on several television shows and films including "The Monkees," "Desperately Seeking Susan," "Baby, It's You" and "Cookie"; and

WHEREAS, Blavat often spent his summers down at the shore where he owned the popular dance club "Memories in Margate." This part of his career led to many friendships with big entertainers like Sammy Davis

Jr., Don Rickles and even Frank Sinatra; and

WHEREAS, Blavat influenced many notable musicians who hailed from the Philadelphia suburbs, including Daryl Hall and Todd Rundgren, who cited Blavat as inspiring their musical careers; and

WHEREAS, Blavat received numerous honors and recognitions for his illustrious career. He was inducted into the Philadelphia Music Alliance's Hall of Fame in 1993 and received his name on the Walk of Fame along the Avenue of the Arts in Center City. In 1998 he was included in a permanent exhibit in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Blavat was also inducted into the Broadcast Pioneers of Philadelphia's Hall of Fame in 2002. He appeared regularly in the Italian American Parade in Philadelphia and was a guest for many years in 6abc's Thanksgiving Day Parade; and

WHEREAS, At the time of his death, he was still heard regularly on his own Geator Gold Radio network, and on his weekly Saturday night show on WXPB-FM (88.5), "The Geator's Rock 'n' Roll Rhythm & Blues Express"; and

WHEREAS, Blavat leaves behind four daughters, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and his longtime partner Keely Stahl; and

WHEREAS, Blavat's insatiable energy and love for music shaped the culture of Philadelphia's music and touched the lives of many. His impact on Philadelphia will be felt for generations and artists to come; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby honors the life and legacy of South Philadelphia Legendary Disc Jockey and Entertainer Jerry Blavat known as "The Geator with the Heater" and "The Boss with the Hot Sauce".

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