

Legislation Text

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Also naming the 3600 block of West Warren Street “Coach Lurline Jones U-City Way” to honor Coach Lurline Jones and her long history of coaching and mentorship in the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, Lurline Jones, Civil rights activist and the City’s most-winning basketball coach for the past 52 years, has changed the lives of many young West Philadelphians and helped over 300 girls go to college on scholarships; and

WHEREAS, Lurline grew up in North Philadelphia in a strict Christian household, raised by a single-mother Mary Nixon, a domestic worker from the Eastern Shore of Maryland, after her father passed when she was 10 years old. Mary took Lurline to historic sites along the East coast to teach her about Black history, and always encouraged her to speak her mind when she witnessed injustice; and

WHEREAS, Lurline began playing basketball at William Penn High School for Girls to avoid doing chores at home after school. In a time that Varsity basketball for girls did not exist, they were made to play in skirts on half a court to discourage running; and

WHEREAS, Lurline continued her basketball career as she entered Morgan State University in the early 1960s, during the modern Civil Rights movement. In 1963, she was jailed with hundreds of other Morgan students after protesting the segregation policy at a nearby movie theater; and

WHEREAS, After graduation, Jones moved back to Philadelphia and took a coaching job at the new University City High School, taking pointers from other legendary coaches at the time including Temple’s John Chaney and Cheyney State’s C. Vivian Stringer, she took the U-City Jaguars from an abysmal 0-13 record, to winning consecutive public league championships in 1978 and 1979; and

WHEREAS, Upset that the girls’ basketball teams were excluded from the Citywide championships between public and Catholic schools, she filed a lawsuit under Title IX of the Civil Rights Act against the school district and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, becoming its lead plaintiff; and

WHEREAS, Though she was sometimes ridiculed for bringing the lawsuit, she continued coaching - and winning at University City High. After 33 years, winning 647 games and 12 city championships, she retired in 2007, leaving retirement to coach girls’ basketball, first at Germantown High School and then at Martin Luther King High School in West Oak Lane, where she still serves as a mentor today; and

WHEREAS, Lurline was honored by Senator Bob Casey in Washington D.C. during Black History Month in 2024 as a civil rights trailblazer and powerhouse basketball coach and mentor; and

WHEREAS, Lurline still works with young people, continuing to empower them to pursue their dreams of going to college and fighting for equity of treatment for women’s sports; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the 3600 block of West Warren

Street also be named “Coach Lurline Jones U-City Way” to honor Coach Lurline Jones and her long history of coaching and mentorship in the City of Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Lurline Jones, in recognition of this occasion, further evidencing the sincere admiration and respect of this legislative body.