

Legislation Text

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Also naming Sears Street between 27th Street and 28th Street “Ella Best Way”, to honor Ms. Ella Pridgen-Best, founder of “Don’t Shoot, I Want a Future”, for her years of community activism and her contributions to the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, Ella Best was born in Philadelphia on March 28, 1961, to Calister and Queenie Pridgen. The fifth of six children, Ella was brought up in a loving household that stressed the importance of faith and community; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Best graduated from South Philadelphia High School in 1979 before working for 19 years as an intake specialist with Berger Montague, a prestigious Philadelphia-based law firm. Ella’s continued passion for service led her to enroll in Harcum College in 2013 to pursue a degree in Human Services. Determined to demonstrate to her children and grandchildren the importance of lifelong education, Ella earned a 3.81 GPA and was inducted in to the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, graduating *magna cum laude* from Harcum in 2016; and

WHEREAS, On July 5, 1997, Ella married the love of her life and her best friend, Norman Best, with whom she raised four children and seven grandchildren. In 2007, Ella and Norman founded an organization “Don’t Shoot, I Want a Future” that was dedicated to serving at-risk youth and reducing violence in their South Philadelphia Community; and

WHEREAS, As president of “Don’t Shoot, I Want a Future”, Ms. Best was dedicated to providing positive outlets for young people in South Philadelphia. These activities included basketball leagues, kickall clinics, summer camps, book clubs, music festivals, and a Girl Scout Troop in the neighborhood. When asked about her approach to community service, Ms. Best would humbly explain, “I am changing things by being my best self”; and

WHEREAS, In addition to her anti-violence activism, Ella Best and “Don’t Shoot, I Want a Future” were involved in a variety of community initiatives aimed at reducing hunger and poverty in Philadelphia. Ms. Best organized a Thanksgiving Dinner in 2016 to feed those in need and her organization regularly sponsored winter coat drives and Christmas gift donations to benefit local families. “There are lots of people who don’t have much, and I don’t mind giving,” Ms. Best explained; and

WHEREAS, In 2016, Ms. Best became a community ambassador for Philadelphia’s Indego Bike Share Program, introduced to the program by friend and fellow-ambassador Kim Smith. Ella Best quickly became passionate about bicycling as a healthy transportation alternative that offered her the opportunity to engage with her neighbors in a whole new way. As an ambassador, Ms. Best began organizing community rides that raised awareness for bicycle safety and other issues, including gun violence and hunger in Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, In recognition of her years of dedicated service to her community, Ella Best was named a Philly Game Changer by CBS-3 in 2016 and a Fallen Hero by Philadelphia’s 17th Police District, among a host of other awards. Beyond the official recognition that she has received, her legacy will continue to live on in the

memory of those whose lives she touched. Described as the “community mom” by fellow anti-violence activist Anton Moore, Ms. Best will be remembered for her tireless dedication to improving the city she called home; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Sears Street between 27th Street and 28th Street be named “Ella Best Way”, to honor Ms. Ella Pridgen-Best, founder of “Don’t Shoot, I Want a Future”, for her years of community activism and her contributions to the City of Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Mr. Norman Best, as evidence of the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.