

Legislation Text

File #: 190298, **Version:** 0

Also naming Watts Street between Girard Avenue and Poplar Street as Sonny Driver Drive.

WHEREAS, Richard “Sonny” Driver was a pioneer in the music, entertainment, and media industries here in the City of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Sonny was the first African American booking agent in the City of Philadelphia and the founder of SCOOP USA, a weekly community newspaper highlighting the African American Community; and

WHEREAS, A proud military veteran who served in World War II after graduating from Germantown High School, Sonny’s eye was on entertainment when he came back home. Not only did he promote shows for Black artists and entertainers in Philadelphia, from North Philly to West Philly, to Germantown, he also promoted shows in Chester, Camden, Atlantic City, and other locations throughout the Delaware Valley; and

WHEREAS, First published out of his Watts Street office in 1960, Sonny saw SCOOP USA as a way to showcase in print the vast number of minority entertainers performing in the Delaware Valley; and

WHEREAS, Sonny saw Philadelphia as the entertainment capital of the East Coast and for over 30 years, he made SCOOP USA the newspaper club and bar owners used to advertise events at their establishments; and

WHEREAS, SCOOP USA provided a platform to help improve the state of African Americans in Philadelphia. Sonny worked with the late Cecil B. Moore to open Girard College to African-American students and forced major retail outlets in Center City to not just allow African Americans to shop in their stores but be allowed to work and welcomed at their eating establishments too; and

WHEREAS, He later worked with the Freedom Fighters to honor Cecil B. Moore’s work by changing Columbia Avenue to Cecil B. Moore Avenue. In the early 2000’s, Sonny made it his personal mission to have West River Drive renamed in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., collecting thousands of signatures on petitions, running weekly ads in SCOOP USA and organizing demonstrations on West River Drive; and

WHEREAS, On December 28, 2017 Richard “Sonny” Driver passed away at the age of 91, leaving a legacy that will last for generations to come; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby also name Watts Street between Girard Avenue and Poplar Street as Sonny Driver Drive.