

Legislation Text

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Honoring and recognizing Kris Soffa, Carlene Neal, Majeeda A. Rashid, Debbie Fortune, Sharon Wittaker, and Joyce Drayton on their legacies of leadership and achievement in promoting toxic free environments, community development services, leadership in state government, and music education in the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, Kris Soffa is a civic and community leader with over thirty years of experience organizing efforts that have preserved open space, protected watersheds and promoted responsible urban planning in the Philadelphia area. Ms. Soffa currently serves on the Philadelphia Parks and Recreation Commission, the Police Advisory Committee and serves as a Democratic Committee person. Ms. Soffa is a certified Pennsylvania Naturalist and Friends of the Wissahickon Trail Ambassador. Ms. Soffa continues to work for a toxic free Philly; and

WHEREAS, Carlene Neal worked with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission for thirty-five years and retired as the Regional Director of the Philadelphia Office in 2010. She is a graduate of Penn State University and Columbia University School of Social Work. Ms. Neal worked endlessly on issues involving civil rights, civil justice, and voting rights. Ms. Neal is a proud member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated and has led the Chapter in mobilizing members to act on several issues impacting the quality of life for people of color as the Connection Committee Co-chair. Ms. Neal is also the Chapter's Co-chair of the Oldies but Goodies Committee which raises money to take high school students on the Black College Tour. Ms. Neal has received numerous honors and awards for making a difference in our community.

WHEREAS, Majeeda Rashid is a graduate of Citizens Planning Institute and puts her knowledge to good use as the Chief Operating Officer of Nicetown, Community Development Corporation. Ms. Rashid helped Nicetown complete an affordable housing and commercial development planning effort, organized block captains and led fundraising workshops. Ms. Rashid has secured funding and completed several community development projects, creating affordable housing units, commercial space, mixed-income housing, and mixed use development. Ms. Rashid's success in garnering financial and institutional support for projects in Nicetown is most impressive. Ms. Rashid continues "putting the nice back in Nicetown;" and

WHEREAS, Debbie Fortune is a retired administrative assistant at Imhotep Charter High School. As vice-chair of The Friends of the David P. Richardson Jr. Celebration Committee, she helped to revive the East Germantown Community Cookout, an all-day event that pays tribute to the late community activist and Pennsylvania state legislator. Her commitment to community youth includes setting up a computer lab in the Lonnie Young Recreation Center and establishing Cluster Teams at Martin Luther King and Germantown High Schools. Ms. Fortune is an advocate for education and is helping to close the gap in the digital divide; and

WHEREAS, Sharon Wittaker, nicknamed "Soul" is engages in planning for the East Germantown Community Cookout, the annual event that honors the legacy of David P. Richardson, Jr. Ms. Whittaker works with many young people at the Belfield Recreation Center as a volunteer to keep youth off the streets and busy with positive activities. She also works with older adults as a caregiver. Ms. Whittaker's greatest passion in life is

working with the youth and seniors of our community; and

WHEREAS, Joyce Drayton founded the Georgia E. Gregory Interdenominational School of Music (GEGISOM) in North Philadelphia nearly 20 years ago. The music education non-profit is named in honor of her mom, who was known as the Pied Piper of Nicetown because of her efforts to gather neighborhood children to serve in her church choir. Since its founding, more than 2000 young people have taken music lessons regardless of their financial means; and therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Honors and recognizes Kris Soffa, Carlene Neal, Majeeda Rashid, Debbie Fortune, Sharon Whittaker, and Joyce Drayton on their legacies of leadership and achievement in promoting toxic free environments, community development services, leadership in state government, and music education in the City of Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to each honoree as evidence of the sincere respect and admiration of this legislative body.