

Legislation Text

File #: 180271, **Version:** 0

Recommending that the United States Postal Service select Alpha Kappa Alpha founder Ethel Hedgeman Lyle for inclusion in its commemorative postage stamp collection.

WHEREAS, Ethel Hedgeman Lyle was born on February 10, 1887, in St. Louis, Missouri, and attended Howard University at a time when few women of color were afforded the opportunity to attain a college education; and

WHEREAS, The Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority is a national sisterhood founded in 1908 at Howard University, under the leadership of Ethel Hedgeman Lyle. Other founders included Anna Easter Brown, Beula Elizabeth Burke, Lillie Burke, Marjorie Hill, Margaret Flagg Holmes, Lavinia Norman, Lucy Diggs Slowe, and Marie Woolfork Taylor; and

WHEREAS, Ethel Hedgeman Lyle and her counterparts were conscious of their unique positions as college-educated women of color, just a half-century removed from the horrific slavery era of American History. With Hedgeman Lyle at the helm, the group of students founded the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and dedicated themselves and their new sisterhood to “Service to all Mankind”; and

WHEREAS, Since 1908, the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority has grown from the founding nine members into an organization of nearly 300,000 sorors at over 1,000 chapters worldwide. True to their founder’s mission of “service to all mankind,” the sisterhood remains focused on its support of programs aimed at improving community health, education, and human rights, among other issues; and

WHEREAS, Among the many initiatives founded by the sisters of Alpha Kappa Alpha are several programs related to increasing educational access and attainment. The Educational Advancement Foundation, founded in 1980, is a tax-exempt branch of the sorority dedicated to providing “financial support to individuals and organizations engaged in lifelong learning”. Through EAF, Alpha Kappa Alpha has provided more than \$200,000 in scholarships to 1,400 students nationwide; and

WHEREAS, In 2017 alone, the sisters of Alpha Kappa Alpha provided over six million hours in service and contributed nearly \$15 million to community programs worldwide; and

WHEREAS, If selected by the Postal Service for the 2019-20 Forever Stamp collection, Ethel Hedgeman Lyle would join just fifteen other African-American women who have earned that honor, including Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Ida B. Wells, and fellow-Alpha Kappa Alpha sister Zora Neal Hurston; and

WHEREAS, Ethel Hedgeman Lyle’s life of selfless devotion to others lives on in the continued work of the organization that she founded, the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. Hedgeman Lyle’s enduring legacy as a trailblazer for the thousands of Alpha Kappa Alpha sisters who would follow her in “service to all mankind” renders her deserving of commemoration and gratitude; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it is recommended that the

United States Postal Service select Alpha Kappa Alpha founder Ethel Hedgeman Lyle for inclusion in its commemorative postage stamp collection.