

## Legislation Text

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Recognizing and Honoring the Life and Music of Renowned Jazz Recording Artist Ahmad Jamal.

**WHEREAS**, Ahmad Jamal was born on July 2, 1930, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and

**WHEREAS**, He was a child prodigy who began to play the piano at the age of three and began formal studies at age seven; and

**WHEREAS**, While in high school, he studied under the tutelage of noted African-American concert singer and teacher Mary Cardwell Dawson and pianist James Miller; and

**WHEREAS**, He joined the musicians' union at the age of 14, and began touring after graduation from Westinghouse High School at the age of 17, drawing critical acclaim for his solos; and

**WHEREAS**, In 1951 he formed his first trio, The Three Strings and was eventually discovered by record producer John Hammond who signed them to Okeh Records, a division of Columbia, now Sony Records; and

**WHEREAS**, In 1955, under the Argo Records label he recorded his first album, which included jazz hits *New Rhumba*, *Excerpts From The Blues*, *Medley (actually I Don't Want To Be Kissed)*, and *It Ain't Necessarily So*, -- all later utilized by Miles Davis and Gil Evans on the albums *Miles Ahead* and *Porgy and Bess*; and

**WHEREAS**, Working with the house trio at Chicago's Pershing Hotel in 1958, Mr. Jamal made an on-location recording for Argo Records entitled *But Not For Me*. The resulting hit single and album remained on the Ten-Best Selling charts for an amazing 108 weeks- unprecedented for a jazz album; and

**WHEREAS**, In 1970, Mr. Jamal performed the title composition for the soundtrack of the film *MASH!* and in 1995, two tracks, *Music, Music, Music*, and *Poinciana* from his smash album *But Not For Me*, were featured in the Clint Eastwood film, *The Bridges of Madison County*; and

**WHEREAS**, In 1994, Mr. Jamal received the American Jazz Masters Fellowship Award from the National Endowment for the Arts and in that same year he was named a Duke Ellington Fellow at Yale University, where he performed commissioned works with the Assai String Quartet; and

**WHEREAS**, In June 2007, the French Government inducted him into the prestigious Order of the Arts and Letters; former recipients include Ella Fitzgerald, William Faulkner, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Jackson Pollack, Alan Ginsberg and Tony Morrison; and

**WHEREAS**, His latest recording, *It's Magic*, hit the Billboard Chart at #13 immediately after its release in the U.S. and in France he received the equivalent of a Grammy Award; approaching 80, his music remains youthful, fresh, imaginative and always influential; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Jamal's connections to Philadelphia include performing on the Dick Clarke Show, broadcast from Philadelphia's famous Showboat; and

**WHEREAS**, He was quoted as saying: *Philadelphia certainly was one of my favorite cities and Broad Street and I were no strangers! You might know I worked with a song and dance team that was based at 52nd and Haverford, The Caldwells , and that is when I wrote one of my biggest copyrights, “Ahmad's Blues”*; and

**WHEREAS**, Ahmad Jamal continues an impressive performance schedule around the world after more than four decades, continuing his outstanding technical command and identifiable sound as a piano stylist incorporating a unique sense of space in his music- he is truly one of kind; now therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, That the Philadelphia City Council Hereby Recognizes and Honors the Life and Music of Renowned Jazz Recording Artist Ahmad Jamal; and

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented as a Profound Expression of this Council’s Recognition and Appreciation.