

Legislation Text

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Honoring the Life of Anne d'Harnoncourt.

WHEREAS, The Council of the City of Philadelphia deeply mourns the loss of noted civic leader, cultural advocate, and Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Philadelphia Museum of Art ("Art Museum"), Anne d'Harnoncourt, and is proud to hereby honor her remarkable legacy; and

WHEREAS, As a national and international leader in the arts, Anne d'Harnoncourt was known for her steadfast devotion to the advancement, enjoyment, and educational impact of art and culture throughout the City of Philadelphia, the region, the United States, and the world; and

WHEREAS, Born on September 7, 1943 in Washington, D.C. and raised in Manhattan by her father, René d'Harnoncourt, who was a painter and Director of the Museum of Modern Art for twenty years, and her mother, Sarah Carr d'Harnoncourt, Anne d'Harnoncourt attended the Brearley School and Radcliffe College, where she majored in European and British history and literature and graduated magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa, and attended London University's Courtauld Institute of Art, earning a Master's Degree; and

WHEREAS, Ms. d'Harnoncourt began her career at the Art Museum in 1967 as a Curatorial Assistant in the Department of Painting and Sculpture, and became the Assistant Curator of 20th Century Art at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1969, where she met her future husband, Joseph J. Rishel; and

WHEREAS, In 1972, Anne d'Harnoncourt returned to Philadelphia as the Art Museum's Associate Curator of 20th Century Art, and as curator, organized and co-organized numerous ground-breaking exhibitions, including *Marcel Duchamp* in 1973, *Violet Oakley* in 1979, and *Futurism and the International Avant-garde* in 1980, and as a scholar, advanced an understanding and appreciation of art and artists through museum catalogues and publications; and

WHEREAS, Ms. d'Harnoncourt became the Art Museum's Director in 1982, and through the strength of her leadership and belief in the power of art to provide meaningful experiences and enhance the lives of our citizens and visitors from near and far, she vastly expanded the Art Museum's service to the public through a revitalization of numerous galleries that are dedicated to displaying the City's great art treasures; and

WHEREAS, Anne d'Harnoncourt was responsible for the numerous memorable exhibitions that showcased the work of world-renowned artists, including Marcel Duchamp, Paul Cézanne, Vincent Van Gogh, Henry Ossawa Tanner, Thomas Eakins, Salvador Dali, Auguste Renoir, and Frida Kahlo, but also assured that the Art Museum expanded its horizons of imagination with exhibitions dedicated to artists who might have been less well known, like Antonio Mancini or Beauford Delaney, and also brought us exhibitions that expanded our understanding and love of world cultures, like *African Art/African Voices*, *Ike Taiga and Tokuyama Gyokuran*, and *Tesoros: The Arts in Latin America*; and

WHEREAS, in 1996, Ms. d'Harnoncourt launched Philadelphia's concept of cultural tourism with the spectacular Cézanne exhibition that brought unprecedented numbers of visitors to the Art Museum, both from within the region and around the globe, so that today, the Art Museum generates substantial economic impact

on an annual basis, ranging from \$210 million to \$235 million dollars every year; and

WHEREAS, Anne d’Harnoncourt dedicated herself to the power of education to change lives and has built education programs at the Art Museum that serve 85,000 school children in classrooms visits, serve a total of 200,000 children, teens, college students, adults, and seniors annually, provide free after-school, artists-in residence, and K-12 programs free for the Philadelphia Public schools, and has built distance-learning and web-based resources for teachers through the new Wachovia Education Resource Center; and

WHEREAS, Ms. d’Harnoncourt collaborated and partnered with the great diversity of cultural organizations from across the region, including but not limited to, the Free Library of Philadelphia, Taller Puertorriqueño, Police Athletic League, City of Philadelphia Department of Recreation, Mural Arts Program, Curtis Institute of Music, Congreso de Latinos Unidos, Mexican Cultural Center, Council of Spanish Speaking Organizations, African American Museum of Philadelphia, The Lighthouse, Multicultural Affairs Congress, AFRICOM, La Casa Latina of the University of Pennsylvania, and Intercultural Center of Swarthmore College, among many others; and

WHEREAS, Anne d’Harnoncourt made the Art Museum accessible to everyone, including people living with disabilities, with Pay-What-You-Wish Admission on Sundays, discounts every day for students and seniors, free admission for children who are 12 and younger, and free passes to the Art Museum distributed through the Free Library’s Summer Reading Program; and

WHEREAS, Ms. d’Harnoncourt raised the profile of the Art Museum nationally and internationally, and the Art Museum is now considered one of America’s top-25 favorite buildings, and she dynamically enhanced the physical presence of the Art Museum through the addition of the Ruth and Raymond G. Perelman Building, which opened in 2007 and provides state-of-the-art spaces for the enjoyment and study of prints, drawings, photographs, costumes, textiles, modern and contemporary design, the Art Museum’s library and archives, and new education resources; and

WHEREAS, Anne d’Harnoncourt led the charge and partnered with the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts to raise the funds to keep Thomas Eakins’ masterpiece *The Gross Clinic* in Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Anne d’Harnoncourt has led the renovation of the Art Museum’s beloved 80-year-old landmark building, with a Master Plan that includes expansion and renovation of galleries being designed by the world-renowned architect Frank O. Gehry; and

WHEREAS, Anne d’Harnoncourt is the recipient of some of the world’s most prestigious awards, including the Philadelphia Award (1997), Founder’s Award for Exemplary Service to History of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (2001), Order of Art and Letters of the Republic of France (2002), Honorary Doctorate of Law of Princeton University (2002), and the Order of the Aztec Eagle, of the Republic of Mexico (2007), and she served on numerous boards of directors, including the Smithsonian Institution, Georgia O’Keefe Foundation, Henry Luce Foundation, Fabric Workshop and Museum, Fairmount Park Art Association, Japan Society, John Cage Trust, ARTstor, and the International Advisory Committee of the State Hermitage Museum, and has been an active member of the Association of Art Museum Directors and the American Philosophical Society, and a Fellow of the American Academy of Art and Letters, among many other institutional affiliations and involvements around the world; and

WHEREAS, Anne d’Harnoncourt dedicated herself equally to every visitor who came to the Art

Museum, and nurtured a world-class, devoted museum staff, and lived in Philadelphia as a resident of the Fitler Square section of the City, where she is survived by her husband, Mr. Joseph J. Rishel; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby deeply mourn the loss of noted civic leader, cultural advocate, and Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Anne d'Harnoncourt, and proudly honor her remarkable legacy.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to her beloved husband, Mr. Joseph J. Rishel, as evidence of the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.