

Legislation Text

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Also naming the 5600 block of W. Girard Avenue as “Rev. James S. Allen Way”, in honor of Reverend James S. Allen, Sr., to commemorate his thirty-seven years of preaching at Vine Memorial Baptist Church.

WHEREAS, Reverend James S. Allen was born in Columbia County, Arkansas and was the second son of Walter and Georgia Allen; and

WHEREAS, Reverend James S. Allen grew up in rural Arkansas at a time where there was deep segregation and intense discrimination towards African Americans. His early education was in a three-room schoolhouse, to which he had to walk four miles to and from each day; and

WHEREAS, Reverend James S. Allen excelled in his education, and graduated from high school being class valedictorian. Unable to find a job after graduation and unable to afford college, Reverend Allen joined the United States Air Force during the Korean Conflict. He served in Korea and was honorably discharged in 1957. While in Korea, Reverend Allen found his love for religion, and became a preacher when he returned to the United States; and

WHEREAS, On July 5, 1957, Reverend James S. Allen married the late Dorothy Hunter Allen. They had four children and six grandchildren. They lived and practiced ministry in Little Rock, Arkansas and Omaha, Nebraska before moving to Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Allen has received many awards and honors, including the Distinguished Service Award from the late Pennsylvania Congressman William H. Gray in 1980 and an Outstanding Religious Leader's Award from the State of Arkansas in 1986. Reverend Allen's achievements also include being the first President of Black Clergy of Philadelphia and Vicinity; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Allen served in leadership positions with the National Baptist Convention. He served as Chairman of the Election Commission for the National Baptist Convention in 1994. In 2002 and 2007, he served as the General Chair of the Host Committee of the National Baptist Convention. He also served as the Assistant Director of the Ministers Division of the National Baptist Congress of Christian Education; and

WHEREAS, Reverend James S. Allen also served his community through his work in City government. He served as the Special Assistant to Mayor W. Wilson Goode. For twenty-two years, Reverend Allen served as Chair of the Human Relations Commission, and he also served as a member of the Fair Housing Commission; and

WHEREAS, On August 2, 2008, Reverend James S. Allen married Henrietta L. Barnes; and

WHEREAS, Having served as a pastor at five different churches throughout his lifetime, Reverend Allen believed God calls us to positions of service and then moves us on to the next task. Reverend Allen retired on December 31, 2015, after serving the Vine Memorial Baptist Church and community for thirty-seven years; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the dedicated service of Reverend James S. Allen, Sr. to Vine Memorial Baptist Church is honored and the 5600 block of W. Girard Avenue shall henceforth also be known as “Rev. James S. Allen Way”.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Reverend James S. Allen as evidence of the sincere respect and appreciation of this legislative body.