

Legislation Text

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Honoring the life and legacy of Bennie Swans, founding president of Philadelphia's nationally acclaimed Crisis Intervention Network.

WHEREAS, Bennie Swans was a beloved and renowned community leader, who gained national recognition for his efforts to reduce violence and prevent drug use; and

WHEREAS, While Swans grew up in Philadelphia during a tumultuous time filled with gang violence, he was able to turn his life around at an early age and focus it on youth rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, Swans further showed his courage and bravery by serving the U.S. Army during the Vietnam war, where he was wounded and earned three Silver Stars, two Bronze Stars and a Purple Heart; and

WHEREAS, Once he returned to Philadelphia, Swans began volunteering to prevent gang violence, eventually helping to create a program called Safe Streets, Inc., which organized the gangs in North and West Philadelphia to work for peace; and

WHEREAS, From that model, and with the help of Arlen Specter and probation officer Tom Reid, was born the city-funded Crisis Intervention Network (CIN). CIN was a program that used a variety of methods to help stop violence in Philadelphia, including using crisis teams of former gang members to help mentor younger members against gang life. Swans led this program as its president for 14 years. Swans's model spread to Chicago and Los Angeles, where he took on the challenge of heading a Community Youth Service Project under the LA City Probation office; and

WHEREAS, Swans also completed a social administration bachelor's degree at Antioch University's Philadelphia campus and earned credits toward a master's degree. Swans later moved his family to Myrtle Beach where he once again led community efforts to address violence, affordable housing, AIDS and more; and

WHEREAS, Swans helped to organize an event to honor Martin Luther King, Jr., in Myrtle Beach. The event not only celebrated the civil rights icon but everyone in the community. He also served as a Trustee at Mount Olive AME Church, was a member of the Myrtle Beach Human Rights Commission, and was selected to chair the Carolina African-American Heritage Foundation; and

WHEREAS, Bennie Swans's legacy is remembered and survived by his wife, Marcella, his sons; Terrance, Mwana, and Bennie, as well as his numerous grand-children; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby honors the life and legacy of Bennie Swans, founding president of Philadelphia's nationally acclaimed Crisis Intervention Network.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Bennie Swans, further evidencing the sincere admiration and respect of this legislative body.