



City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Legislation Text

File #: 230096, Version: 0

Also naming 53rd Street, between Parrish Street and Westminster Avenue, "Ethel Hedgemon Lyle Way," in honor of Ethel Hedgemon Lyle, principal Founder of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®, the oldest Greek-letter organization for college-trained African American women in the United States of America.

WHEREAS, Ethel Hedgemon Lyle was born on February 10, 1887 in St. Louis, Missouri. Ethel Hedgemon Lyle was educated at Sumner High School, graduated with honors and was awarded a scholarship to Howard University where she matriculated in 1904. Inspired primarily by her English instructor, Miss Ethel Robinson, she founded the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority during her junior year; and

WHEREAS, On January 15, 1908, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® was founded, and its constitution adopted, by Ethel Hedgemon, Anna Easter Brown, Beulah Burke, Lillie Burke, Margaret Flagg, Marjorie Hill, Lavinia Norman, Lucy Diggs Slowe, Marie Woolfolk, Norma Boyd, Ethel Jones, Alice Murray, Sarah Meriwether, Joanna Berry, Carrie Snowden and Harriet Terry; and

WHEREAS, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® was founded on the principles of service and sisterhood, amid the existence of a deeply segregated society, its presence broadened the scope of opportunity and empowerment for women of African descent and ignited a movement toward the establishment of numerous other organizations of similar vision and engagement; and

WHEREAS, Upon graduation from Howard University with a Bachelor of Arts degree, Ethel Hedgemon Lyle taught in Eufaula, Oklahoma and in the public schools of Centralia, Illinois. Upon settling in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Ethel Hedgemon Lyle taught English at the Thomas Durham and Chester A. Arthur Schools and pursued graduate studies at the University of Pennsylvania and Temple University; and

WHEREAS, Ethel Hedgemon Lyle was elected Treasurer of the national body of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® in 1923 and in 1926, she was named Honorary International President. She was a charter member of the Mu Chapter in Philadelphia and was a charter member and first President of the Omega Omega Chapter, established in Philadelphia on December 10, 1926; and

WHEREAS, Ethel Hedgemon Lyle was active in church and civic affairs and was a member of the historic Mt. Pisgah AME Church. She was the founder of the Mother's Club of Philadelphia and was a charter member of the West Philadelphia League of Women Voters. In 1937, she was appointed chairman of a committee of 100 women who played an important role in planning the celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the Constitution of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Ethel Hedgemon Lyle, with her husband George Lyle, Sr., resided in West Philadelphia at 415 North 53rd Street for 26 years. Their only child, George Lyle, Jr., was born in Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, After a lifetime of service to her sorority and community, Ethel Hedgemon Lyle's magnificent life ended on November 28, 1950 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® exists as a worldwide, service-based organization of 300,000 members with more than 1,000 active graduate and undergraduate chapters, dedicated to excellence in “service to all mankind” ;and

WHEREAS, The legacy of Ethel Hedgemon Lyle, a woman of faith and devotion, of courage and strength, of vision and foresight, a woman of conviction and determination, lives on in the hearts and minds of those who continue to serve Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That 53rd Street, between Parrish Street and Westminster Avenue, shall also be named “Ethel Hedgemon Lyle Way,” in honor of Ethel Hedgemon Lyle, principal Founder of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®, the first Greek-letter organization for African American women in the country.