

Legislation Text

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Recognizing and honoring Roberto Lugo for his contributions to the Arts, and in celebration of his exceptional achievement in securing a prestigious Heinz Awards for Arts.

WHEREAS, Roberto Lugo was born and raised in Kensington and grew up to become one of the most prestigious artists in the United States. Roberto is an artist, ceramicist, social activist, poet & educator; and

WHEREAS, The works of Roberto are found in the permanent collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Philadelphia Museum of Art, The High Museum of Art, The Museum of Fine Arts Boston, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Brooklyn Museum, Walters Art Museum, among several more; and

WHEREAS, He remains a resident of Philadelphia, nurturing generations of artists as an Assistant Professor at Tyler School of Art and Architecture at Temple University; and

WHEREAS, Among his best-known works is Digable Underground, a stoneware urn embellished with graffiti and renderings of Harriet Tubman and Erykah Badu, found in the permanent collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; and

WHEREAS, Roberto has gone on to honor other Philadelphians through his art, developing a mural that pays homage to Tarik “Black Thought” Trotter of The Roots. The mural, titled The Talented Mr. Trotter: You Can Be Anything, is located at The Clay Studio in Kensington; and

WHEREAS, Lugo’s work masterfully weaves the mediums of classical poetry in conjunction with portraiture and surface design reminiscent of his North Philadelphia upbringing and Hip-Hop culture to highlight themes of poverty, inequality, and racial injustice. Lugo’s works take on traditional European and Asian ceramics, adding a contemporary flavor with 21st-century street sensibility; and

WHEREAS, Roberto has his first solo exhibition in New York titled The Gilded Ghetto, which runs from September 7-October 27, 2023, at R&Company; and

WHEREAS, The hand-painted surfaces of his works feature classic decorative patterns and motifs combined with elements of urban life, graffiti and portraits of individuals who have been historically absent from traditional luxury vessels, individuals such as Sojourner Truth, Dr. Cornel West, and The Notorious BIG, as well as Lugo’s family members and, very often, himself; and

WHEREAS, Roberto is the recipient of a \$250,000 Heinz Award, one of the largest awards for individual Arts achievement in the world. As an artist, Roberto has excelled and continues to excel; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it does hereby recognize and honor Roberto Lugo for his masterful work, as an artist, educator, and role model for generations of Philadelphians.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Roberto Lugo as evidence of the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.