City of Philadelphia

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Title:	Honoring the life and legacy of Sister Francesca Onley and acknowledging her lifelong commitment to her faith, family, and Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, Holy Family University, and Philadelphia.				
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Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result	Tally
4/29/2021	0	CITY COUNCIL	ADOPTED		
4/22/2021	0	CITY COUNCIL	Introduced and Ordered Placed On Next Week's Final Passage Calendar		

Honoring the life and legacy of Sister Francesca Onley and acknowledging her lifelong commitment to her faith, family, and Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, Holy Family University, and Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, Sister Francesca Onley was born March 4, 1933 to Edward and Marie (Rice) Onley in Philadelphia. She entered the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth in 1950 and professed her final vows with the congregation in 1959; and

WHEREAS, Sister Francesca earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in business from Holy Family College in 1959, a master's degree in secondary education from Marywood University in 1966 and a Ph.D. in higher education administration from Southern Illinois University in 1986; and

WHEREAS, From 1953 until 1980, Sister Francesca served at Nazareth Academy Grade School and Nazareth Academy High School, both in Philadelphia, as a faculty member, guidance counselor, assistant principal and principal; and

WHEREAS, In 1980 she was asked to serve as assistant to the president of Holy Family College under Sister Lillian Budny. The following year Sister Francesca was appointed president of the college to succeed Sister Lillian upon her retirement; and

WHEREAS, As the Northeast Philadelphia university's fourth president, she led the transformation of Holy Family College into a university in 2002 and added many educational programs including criminal justice, along with graduate and doctoral studies in education; and

WHEREAS, She directed the construction of Stevenson Lane Residence Hall in 2009, the renovation of the Nurse Education Building simulation lab in 2008, the construction of the Garden Residence Apartments in 2006, construction of the Education and Technology building in 2005, the renovation of St. Joseph Residence

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Hall in 2005 and construction of the university's Campus Center in 1988; and

WHEREAS, Under her guidance, the university also expanded into multiple satellite campuses. Additionally, through the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth and Sister Francesca's association with the United Nations International Association of University Presidents (IAUP), Holy Family University established international friendships and successfully reached partnership agreements with universities in Puerto Rico, the Philippines and China. Her interest in international partnerships also led to the establishment of English-language education programs for seminarians in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, During these years of expansion, Sister Francesca's motto was always, "Little by little. You may not be able to do it all at once, but you can do it little by little"; and

WHEREAS, In 2015, the university renamed the Education and Technology Center the Sister Francesca Onley Education and Technology Center in her honor. During her educational career, Sister Francesca was distinguished by her leadership ability and gained the respect of those who worked with her. She earned numerous awards including Woman of Distinction in 2004 by the Philadelphia Business Journal and Outstanding Contributor to Catholic Education in 2000 by the Catholic Philopatrian Literary Institute; and

WHEREAS, Sister Francesca served as the president and chief administrative officer of Holy Family University beginning in 1981 until her retirement in 2014 at the age of 81; and

WHEREAS, Throughout her ministry of 32 years, Sister Francesca developed facilities, programs, and services to address the needs of changing times and changing populations of students at Holy Family University. She embodied the values of family and providing opportunities for every person to reach his or her fullest potential; and

WHEREAS, On April 17, 2021, Sister Francesca Onley passed away at the age of 88. The Philadelphia community that she served was significantly impacted through her neverending grace, ferocity of spirit and deep faith. Sister Francesca Onley's legacy continues in the lives of Holy Family University graduates who have and continue to change our world each day; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby honors and recognizes Sister Francesca Onley for her lifelong commitment to her faith, family and Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, Holy Family University and Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, Holy Family University, and the family of Sister Francesca Onley as further evidence of the sincere admiration and respect of this legislative body.

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