

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 140703, **Version:** 0

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Also naming West Venango Street between 5th Street and 7th Street “Joaquín Rivera Way” to honor the memory of Joaquín Rivera and to recognize his life and memorialize his lasting legacy.

WHEREAS, Joaquín Rivera was born in 1946 in Cayey, Puerto Rico. The youngest of eleven children, Joaquín’s love of music began at an early age, and though his family was too poor to afford instruments, he would follow local musicians around in order to learn what he could from them while they took breaks from playing; and

WHEREAS, When he turned eighteen, Joaquín Rivera moved to Philadelphia where he worked in a fabric laminating factory and attended classes at night to learn English and complete his GED. He went on to attend the Community College of Philadelphia and Rutgers University; and

WHEREAS, For over thirty years Mr. Rivera worked at Olney High School, where he counseled bilingual students, and during his time at the school he helped students connect with and explore Puerto Rican folk art; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Rivera’s influence in promoting Puerto Rican folk art extended beyond the doors of Olney High School, and led to a revitalization of traditional customs and culture in the community at large; and

WHEREAS, Along with his daughter, Joaquin Rivera founded Los Pleneros del Batey, a musical ensemble that has been performing Puerto Rican folk music in Philadelphia and beyond over the past twenty years; and

WHEREAS, Los Pleneros have performed at a diverse range of venues including schools, hospitals, senior centers, and prisons, as well as a wide range of events such as strikes, political rallies, protests, and funerals, with the mission of connecting the community with Puerto Rican culture; and

WHEREAS, In addition to well-known and traditional music, Joaquín Rivera and Los Pleneros have taken on contemporary issues through original music that addressed a range of topical subjects, from U.S. bombing practices to the AIDS crisis, and their song “Philadelphia, I Choose to Stay In My Home,” chronicled the impact of redevelopment initiatives on neighborhood residents, and was embraced by the local community as emblematic of their struggle; and

WHEREAS, On November 28, 2009 Mr. Rivera tragically died while awaiting care at a local hospital, and on that day Philadelphia lost someone who inspired and touched the lives of countless students, and who used traditional Puerto Rican culture to bring people together and form lasting community bonds; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That West Venango Street between 5th Street and 7th Street is also named “Joaquín Rivera Way” to honor the memory of Joaquín Rivera and to recognize his life and memorialize his lasting legacy.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the congregation of Christ Church and St. Ambrose as evidence of the sincere respect of this legislative body.