

Legislation Text

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Honoring the Life of Joyce Craig-Lewis.

WHEREAS, The Council of the City of Philadelphia deeply mourns the loss of Joyce Craig-Lewis, the first female member of the Philadelphia Fire Department to die in the line of duty; and

WHEREAS, in the early morning hours of Tuesday, December 9th, Firefighter Craig-Lewis was part of a team of first responders to a house fire on the 1600 block of Middleton Street in the West Oak Lane section of the City; and

WHEREAS, Firefighter Craig-Lewis and other members of her fire crew were confronted with heavy heat and smoke conditions from the basement fire that posed significant tactical challenges and yet their bravery helped to save the life of Shirley Byrd, the elderly widow that lived in the home; and

WHEREAS, on Tuesday, Firefighter Craig-Lewis was not scheduled to work but as a dedicated public servant chose to work overtime at Engine 73 in Mt. Airy and her bravery and dedication were consistent throughout her 11 year career. Eight years ago while battling a fire, she suffered significant burns that required skin graft surgeries and was bedridden for two months; yet, and after she recovered, she refused to be assigned to desk duty and went back to firefighting; and

WHEREAS, Firefighter Craig-Lewis was one of five children and as a child wanted to be a firefighter and was not deterred when people told her that just men were firefighters. She was a 1995 graduate of Murrell Dobbins Vocational High School and previously worked as a driver and dispatcher for SEPTA's CCT paratransit service for seniors and people with disabilities. In order to realize her childhood dream, Ms. Craig-Lewis took a pay cut and waited 18 months to be accepted into the Fire Academy and she started her career at Engine 9 in West Mount Airy and then served for many years at Engine 45 in North Philadelphia (one of the City's busiest stations) before transferring to Engine 64 in Lawncrest; and

WHEREAS, Fire Commissioner Derrick Sawyer said that Joyce Craig-Lewis was a "firefighter's firefighter" and Firefighters Union Local 22 President Joseph Schulle said that she was a very good firefighter who was well liked and respected and worked in some of the busiest areas of the City and Lieutenant Benny Hutchins of Engine 64 said that she will be missed and that she was outstanding in doing everything that she could to make sure somebody was saved or property was saved; and

WHEREAS, Joyce Craig-Lewis dedicated herself and her career as a first responder committed to providing public safety to the residents of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Firefighter Craig-Lewis is survived by her son, Mehki Donte Green, and her daughter, Laylani Lewis, and numerous loved ones, family members, friends, colleagues, and admirers; now, therefore, be it
RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby deeply mourn the loss of Firefighter Joyce Craig-Lewis and proudly honor her life and her ultimate sacrifice on behalf of the City of Philadelphia.

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