Legislation Text

File #: 150904, **Version:** 0

Naming the unit block of 48th Street between Baltimore and Kingsessing Avenues to have “Judge A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr. Way” added to the street signs in recognition of Judge Higginbotham’s tremendous service and contributions to the African American Community throughout his life.

WHEREAS, Judge Higginbotham grew up during the Great Depression and the era of Jim Crow laws. He overcame a childhood marked by economic hardship and segregation to attend Yale Law School where he graduated with honors; and

WHEREAS, He sought an education and career in law where he fought institutionalized racism in the American judicial system. He became the first African American District Attorney in the City of Philadelphia and in 1954 he became a founding partner of the first African American law firm in Philadelphia, Norris, Schmidt, Green Harris, & Higginbotham; and

WHEREAS, In 1962 President Kennedy appointed Higginbotham to the Federal Trade Commission making him the youngest and first African American to ever serve on a federal regulatory commission; and

WHEREAS, Judge Higginbotham played an extraordinary role in the civil rights movement as an advisor to President Johnson after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. and as a member of the National Commission on Causes and Prevention of Violence. President B. Lyndon Johnson nominated him as a federal judge in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania where he became one of the youngest people ever appointed to a federal bench at the age of 35; and

WHEREAS, In 1977 President Jimmy Carter appointed him to the United States Court of Appeals for the third Circuit where he remained for 16 years until his retirement in 1993; and

WHEREAS, He served as a consultant to Nelson Mandela on the formation of the Constitution of South Africa. He continued his commitment to public service when appointed by President Clinton to the United States Commission on Civil Rights; and

WHEREAS, He was the recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom and numerous other honors and awards including honorary degrees from more than 60 universities. Sadly, he died in 1998; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE PHILADELPHIA CITY COUNCIL, Hereby names the unit block of 48th Street between Baltimore and Kingsessing Avenues to have “Judge A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr. Way” added to the street signs in recognition of Judge Higginbotham’s tremendous service and contributions to the African American Community throughout his life.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be Presented to the family of Judge A. Leon Higginbotham as a sincere expression of the Philadelphia City Council’s gratitude and recognition.