

Legislation Text

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Recognizing and Honoring The Philadelphia History Museum at the Atwater Kent, on the Occasion of its 75th Anniversary, for Exhibiting Philadelphia's Rich and Diverse History.

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia History Museum at the Atwater Kent engages Philadelphians and regional visitors with its extraordinary collections that reflect Philadelphia's rich history and the diversity of its people and their neighborhoods through exhibitions and educational programs; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia's 333-year history is highly diverse and complex. The museum weaves together artifacts and displays that through their amalgamation portray the history of this phenomenal City in order for guests to better understand and appreciate the present; and

WHEREAS, The museum engages visitors through interactive features, including iPads and monitors, which allow visitors to learn more about the objects on display in each of the galleries. This keeps with the museum's goal of providing engaging narratives to reveal the captivating story of this City; and

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia History Museum at the Atwater Kent is located at the original site of the Franklin Institute in an elegant Greek-Revival structure just south of Market Street on 7th Street. The building was designed by John Haviland, one of the country's foremost architects, who also designed the formidable Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia's Fairmount neighborhood. The historic building features marble stairs flanked by iconic faux-grained cast iron lamps approaching an inviting main entrance set in a marble surround; and

WHEREAS, As the Haviland building remained unoccupied in the early 1930s, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission considered demolishing it. In an attempt to raise funds and save the edifice, Mayor S. Davis Wilson, along with Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks President Frances Wistar, reached out to inventor and radio pioneer A. Atwater Kent. Kent purchased the site and gave it to the City with the stipulation that it house a museum named after him, which would be dedicated to the history of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia History Museum at the Atwater Kent was officially founded in 1938 and opened to the public in 1941. The Museum has taken on new life since 2012 after undergoing three years of major renovations, and it now boasts a collection of over 100,000 items; and

WHEREAS, The museum is celebrating its 75th Anniversary this year and will re-ignite the iconic gas lamps that flank its entryway in celebration. These gas lamps have an incredible history, having illuminated the front of the Haviland building since 1903. This will be the first time since completion of the renovations that the lamps will be re-ignited; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby recognize and honor the Philadelphia History Museum at the Atwater Kent, on the occasion of its 75th Anniversary, for exhibiting Philadelphia's rich and diverse history.

RESOLVED FURTHER, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the Philadelphia History Museum at the Atwater Kent, evidencing the sincere admiration and respect of this legislative body.