

Legislation Text

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Honoring and remembering Harold B. Hairston, the City of Philadelphia's first African American Fire Commissioner, who passed away on November 1, 2016 at the age of 76.

WHEREAS, Harold B. Hairston was appointed Philadelphia's Fire Commissioner in 1992 by Mayor Ed Rendell, after 29 years of service with the Fire Department. He would be Philadelphia's first African-American Fire Commissioner; and

WHEREAS, Harold B. Hairston's career with the Philadelphia Fire Department spanned 40 years, from 1964 to his retirement in 2004. In addition to his service as Commissioner, Mr. Hairston was a decorated firefighter who received two citations for lifesaving rescues; and

WHEREAS, Hairston oversaw 2,500 employees in the nation's fifth-largest fire department. Furthermore, he led several important improvements to the Fire Department's operation. Fire deaths declined and the average response time improved while Hairston was Fire Commissioner; and

WHEREAS, The Metropolitan Fire Chiefs named Harold Hairston as Fire Chief of the Year in 2003. Additionally, the National Fire and Burglar Alarm Association named him Fire Official of the Year; and

WHEREAS, After his retirement, Harold B. Hairston continued to serve the public as a CBS consultant on fire safety and emergency response issues; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia is a City built by people from a diverse array of cultures. Harold B. Hairston, the City's first African-American Fire Commissioner, was a living example of the value that this diversity brings to the lives of Philadelphia's citizens; and

WHEREAS, We honor Harold B. Hairston for his service to the City of Philadelphia and to its citizens, and we celebrate his lasting legacy both within the City and beyond; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby honor and remember Harold B. Hairston, the City of Philadelphia's first African American Fire Commissioner, who passed away on November 1, 2016 at the age of 76.