

Legislation Text

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Also naming South Broad Street, between Federal Street and Wharton Street, “Anna Cibotti Verna Way,” in honor of Council President Anna C. Verna’s lifetime of service to the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, Anna C. Verna was born and raised in the Point Breeze neighborhood of South Philadelphia, to parents William and Pauline Cibotti. Her parents were deeply involved with their South Philadelphia community and taught Anna the importance of public service from an early age; and

WHEREAS, Anna C. Verna began her remarkable 60-year career with the City of Philadelphia in February of 1951. After 17 years with the City, including a stint in the office of District Attorney and future Mayor Richardson Dilworth, Verna’s father William was elected to serve as Councilman for the 2nd District in 1968. Verna served as an assistant and close advisor to her father, and her passion for public service quickly endeared her to constituents across the District; and

WHEREAS, When William Cibotti passed away suddenly in 1975, residents and community leaders from across the 2nd Council District appealed to Anna to run for election and fill her father’s seat. After a successful campaign, Anna C. Verna began her tenure on Council in 1975, a post which she would hold for 36 years; and

WHEREAS, Anna C. Verna’s career in Council was marked by her devotion to creating opportunities for all citizens in the 2nd Council District and the City of Philadelphia as a whole. A strong proponent of policies designed to encourage job growth and economic opportunity, Councilwoman Verna fought to create a tax environment in Philadelphia that could propel the City into the 21st Century. Councilwoman Verna was also a strong supporter of affordable housing programs and other neighborhood development initiatives, advocating for the creation of the City’s Housing Trust Fund and sponsoring an initiative to provide tax relief for senior citizens, while also facilitating the development of hundreds of affordable housing units across the 2nd Council District; and

WHEREAS, After distinguishing herself during her early years in Council through hard work, perseverance, and integrity, Anna C. Verna rose to the position of Majority Leader, and also served as Chair of Council’s Finance Committee in 1991. As Finance Chair, Councilwoman Verna provided crucial leadership as the City worked to restore fiscal stability and avoid potential bankruptcy. The bond re-financing accomplished under her leadership created over \$1 billion in savings for Philadelphia taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, In 1999, Anna C. Verna shattered a notable glass ceiling in Philadelphia when she became the first woman ever elected to serve as City Council President. Discussing the obstacles that she overcame, Council President Verna recalled that when she began her tenure in Council “many thought women should be in the kitchen... And I worked extremely, extremely hard. I don’t think I was home a night, going to meetings. Because I wanted to prove that they were absolutely, totally wrong”. Over the course of her 12-year Presidency in Council, the longest in the body’s history, Verna earned the respect and admiration of colleagues and constituents from across the City; and

WHEREAS, In addition to her role as Council President, Anna Verna was an active member of the Philadelphia

Italian-American community, helping to found the Columbus Day Parade with her husband, Severino Verna. Council President Verna was honored with the title of “Commendatore” by the Republic of Italy for her contributions to the Italian-American community in the City. Furthermore, Council President Verna was awarded honorary doctorates from Chestnut Hill College and the Community College of Philadelphia. She has also served on the boards of the Franklin Institute, the Philadelphia Art Museum, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and several other organizations in and around the City of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, When Council President Verna retired from elective office in 2011, she was not only the longest-tenured Councilmember, she was the longest-tenured employee in the entire City. Council President Anna C. Verna’s remarkable 60-year career in public service stands as a testament to her dedication to the City of Philadelphia, and this Council body is proud to celebrate her life in service; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That South Broad Street, between Ellsworth Street and Wharton Street, shall also be named “Anna Cibotti Verna Way,” in honor of Council President Anna C. Verna’s lifetime of service to the City of Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Council President Anna Cibotti Verna, as evidence of the sincere respect and admiration of this legislative body.