

Legislation Text

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Also naming West Mantua Avenue between Brown and 36th Streets Herman C. Wrice Way in recognition of his role in creating the Young Great Society in Mantua and his remarkable community activism in mentoring young people and fighting tirelessly against drug violence.

WHEREAS, Herman C. Wrice was born in 1939 in a small coal mining town in West Virginia. When he was seven years old his family moved to Pennsylvania, where they eventually settled in Mantua; and

WHEREAS, Wrice attend Overbrook High School. There he became involved in a gang, however, he changed his path in life due to the guidance of a priest, Father Remeter. Father Remeter saw leadership potential in Wrice and convinced him to use the church hall for basketball games and dances to attract the young people in the community; and

WHEREAS, Wrice was passionate and determined to rid his community of drug violence. In the Mid-1960s, at a time when Mantua was one of the most crime-laden communities in Philadelphia, Herman Wrice alongside Andrew Jenkins came together to form the Young Great Society and the Mantua Community Planners; and

WHEREAS, These organizations held community functions such as arts and crafts gatherings, vocal groups, day trips and tutoring sessions. Together with the local police and activists, Wrice hoped that these activities would deter neighborhood kids from becoming involved in drug activity; and

WHEREAS, In 1988, Wrice organized Mantua Against Drugs (MAD) and led marches against drug dealers in his neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, Wrice personally participated in the demolition and closing of crack houses and led marches against drug dealers who operated freely on the streets; and

WHEREAS, Often facing death threats, Wrice put his personal safety at risk for his community, but he stood firm in the face of danger. He was fearless, and when drug dealers tried to push him around he pushed even harder. He was known for putting up "Wanted" posters with pictures of the "Dealer of the Week", a method that was adopted by other communities in Philadelphia. His message: "Stand up to them and they'll leave"; and

WHEREAS, Herman Wrice was a renowned community organizer that cared deeply for the well being of young people in his community. His activism in Mantua was invaluable and his accomplishments were recognized all over the country. While he and his wife had 6 children of their own, and they adopted many more. Over 40 young men and women called him "Dad" and his presence in Mantua is greatly missed; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE PHILADELPHIA CITY COUNCIL, Hereby also names West Mantua Avenue between Brown and 36th Streets Herman C. Wrice Way in recognition of his role in creating the Young Great Society in Mantua and his remarkable community activism in mentoring young people and fighting tirelessly against drug violence.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Herman C. Wrice as a sincere expression of the Philadelphia City Council's gratitude and recognition.