City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Legislation Text

File #: 190275, **Version:** 0

Also naming Broad Street from Venango Street to Butler Street as “Rev. Dr. Leon Sullivan Way” to honor the ministry of Reverend Dr. Leon H. Sullivan and his legacy of social and economic justice in Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, Born in West Virginia in 1922, Leon Sullivan became a Baptist minister at 18, attending the Union Theological Seminary and receiving a Master’s degree in religion from Columbia University in 1947; and

WHEREAS, In 1950 Rev. Sullivan became pastor of Zion Baptist Church, remaining there until 1988, where church membership increased from 600 to over 6,000 under his tenure; and

WHEREAS, Known as the “Lion of Zion,” Rev. Sullivan realized that job discrimination was a significant problem in Philadelphia and organized and led successful campaigns to challenge discrimination, most notably the “selective patronage” program, an organized boycott of companies that engaged in employment discrimination; and

WHEREAS, Recognizing the need for job training in African American communities, Rev. Sullivan founded and led the first Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America, Inc. (OIC), whose mission is to assist disadvantaged youth and adults to achieve self-sufficiency and empowerment through education, training, job placement, human services, housing and economic development; and

WHEREAS, In 1977, after having served as the first African American on the Board of Directors at General Motors, Sullivan introduced the Sullivan Principles, a set of guidelines for American companies with investments in South Africa, and called for other large corporations to voluntarily withdraw their assets while apartheid was still in effect; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Sullivan also founded the International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH), which created the Peoples Investment Fund for Africa, the Self-Help Investment Program, and the Teachers for African and Schools for Africa programs. IFESH provided books and school supplies for the African continent, distributed medicines to prevent river-blindness, and helped combat the spread of HIV/AIDS; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Sullivan received honorary doctorates from over 50 universities and colleges for his humanitarian and philanthropic activities in addition to the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President George H.W. Bush in 1992 and the Eleanor Roosevelt Award from President Bill Clinton in 1999; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Sullivan’s legacy and impact on the City of Philadelphia continues today through Zion Baptist Church, Sullivan Progress Plaza, the Sullivan Human Services Building and Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC), and Haddington Shopping Plaza; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Broad Street from Venango Street to Butler Street be also named “Dr. Rev. Leon Sullivan Way” to honor the ministry of Reverend Dr. Leon H. Sullivan and his legacy of social and economic justice in Philadelphia.