

Legislation Text

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Also naming 24th Street, between Wharton and Reed Streets, “Dorothy Allen Way,” to honor the life and legacy of Dorothy D. Allen.

WHEREAS, Dorothy D. Allen, born in 1923, grew up in the Point Breeze neighborhood and attended both Southwark and South Philadelphia High Schools. She later received vocational training in the needle trades and became an expert seamstress; and

WHEREAS, As a seamstress, she started a garment business with her future husband, Robert, in 1948, training and employing members of their South Philadelphia community. Later, she went to work at the Quartermaster Depot for over two decades, making uniforms for military servicemembers; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Allen also distinguished herself as a community leader. In the mid-1970s, Ms. Allen was inspired to join the fight against hunger and obtained a grant from the City of Philadelphia to administer a food program in South Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Allen also founded the Barrett Educational Center to ensure that all educational needs of youth and other community members were met. Programming offered by the center included theater and performing arts, sports, tutoring, and arts and crafts. Ms. Allen also ensured that programs for seniors were available, including classes such as grant writing, as well as recreational offerings; and

WHEREAS, Passionate about serving youth in her community, Ms. Allen also offered a highly affordable summer camp for local youth, while hiring hundreds of teenagers and young adults, providing many of them their first job opportunity; and

WHEREAS, In recognition of her love for her neighborhood and her steadfast leadership, Ms. Allen was also elected block captain by her neighbors and served in that role for a number of years; and

WHEREAS, A faithful tithing member of the Mt. Hebron Baptist church, Ms. Allen was a stalwart presence in the church community and served as a deaconess for years; and

WHEREAS, To honor her transformative work with youth and community, Philadelphia City Council President Anna Verna formally recognized Ms. Allen with an award; and

WHEREAS, At the time of her passing, in December of 2019, Deaconess Allen left behind a large, thriving family including two children, six grandchildren, and a host of great-grandchildren. But she also left behind a larger extended “family” of friends, neighbors, and community members who loved her and whom she cherished deeply. In a fitting tribute to her loving, selfless dedication, they were listed alongside her biological family members in her obituary and gathered in large numbers to honor her life. Her unforgettable presence has been sorely missed and will continue to be so; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Does hereby also name 24th Street, between Wharton and Reed Streets, “Dorothy Allen Way,” to honor the life and legacy of Dorothy D. Allen.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Dorothy D. Allen as evidence of the admiration and respect of this body.