

Legislation Text

File #: 200697, **Version:** 0

Also naming the 1500 block of Fitzwater street “United Supreme Council Way” to recognize the United Supreme Council, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Prince Hall Affiliation, Northern Jurisdiction, USA, Inc., for their long track record of charitable works in Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, The United Supreme Council, Northern Jurisdiction, a Black fraternal organization, has been a continuous resident in the city of Philadelphia since 1881, and previously, under another name, dating back to 1856; and

WHEREAS, Beginning in 1881, an initial impetus to have an organizational headquarters stemmed from a desire to have a central repository for the organization’s records and items of historical relevance. During this search for a permanent location the United Supreme Council grew in membership, territory, and prominence. This was especially in that time when men of color were not on an equal social or economic footing as their Caucasian counterparts; and

WHEREAS, In 1923, a location was secured by Dr. Sumner A. Furniss at the old James Pollack Elementary School bounded by Fitzwater, Mole, and Hicks Streets, where the “Scottish Rite Cathedral” was later built; and

WHEREAS, Later leadership, headed by Dr. Russell S. Gideon, eventually sought to expand the footprint and charitable works of the organization by building a home for the elderly and infirm in conjunction with the federal government. The Scottish Rite House was completed and dedicated in 1985 and created 125 units for the senior housing market in South Philadelphia. Additional properties were acquired and the Scottish Rite Tower, a sister building of the Scottish Rite House, was built. This edifice added 106 additional units of affordable housing for South Philadelphia seniors; and

WHEREAS, Another leader, Dr. Solomon Wallace, sought to aid and assist the youth of their constituency. A mentoring program was created-“Saving the African American Male: From Cradle to College.” This initiative captured high school aged Black males and placed them in structured programs of academic achievement and social competence. The program is continuing its impactful work to this day; and

WHEREAS, The United Supreme Council has continued to support the community through fundraising. From the early- to mid-1990s continuing through the present, the organization has raised and awarded approximately \$90,000, year over year, for scholarships to worthy college-bound students in need and the organizations that support them; and

WHEREAS, The United Supreme Council has a remarkably long history of charitable work extending back to the organization’s beginning, more than a century and a half ago, and has remained a constant and positive presence as an integral part of South Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, The United Supreme Council’s objectives of community outreach; personal and fraternal development of its members; and awarding scholarships to need-based college students in underserved communities, will benefit Black Philadelphians for decades to come; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Also names the 1500 block of Fitzwater street “United Supreme Council Way” to recognize the United Supreme Council, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Prince Hall Affiliation, Northern Jurisdiction, USA, Inc., for their decades of charitable works in Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to leadership of the United Supreme Council as evidence of the admiration and respect of this body.