



Legislation Text

File #: 210012, Version: 0

Honoring the life and legacy of Ted Kirsch for his lifelong commitment to educating children, empowering and supporting teachers, and strengthening the Labor movement.

WHEREAS, Ted Kirsch, 81, a social studies teacher and lifelong leader in the national labor movement, died Tuesday, January 19, 2021; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kirsch was born and raised in South Philadelphia and educated in the Philadelphia public school system. He was the first person in his family to attend college, earning degrees from West Chester University and Temple University; and

WHEREAS, In 1960, Mr. Kirsch became a School District of Philadelphia teacher. He taught social studies at Thomas Junior High, Washington High School and Overbrook High School, and instructed one of the first African American history classes in the School District; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kirsch was a pioneering member of the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers. He was fearless and steadfast in his labor activism, walking picket lines and even being jailed for the labor cause; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kirsch was elected to the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers executive board in 1967 and eventually left the classroom to work full time for the union. Mr. Kirsch was overwhelmingly supported by fellow union members (13,000 teachers, nurses, secretaries, and other school-based workers), serving as PFT president for 17 years; as President of the American Federation of Teachers Pennsylvania for 12 years until 2019; and as secretary-treasurer of the Philadelphia Council AFL-CIO; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kirsch's dedication to working people was second only to his dedication to his family. He was married for 57 years to his wife Roberta Kirsch, who died in 2017. Mr. and Mrs. Kirsch met on a blind date when she was 16 and Mr. Kirsch was 18. They married two years later. The Kirschs raised their family in northeast Philadelphia, and ultimately moved to Baker's Bay in the East Torresdale neighborhood of Philadelphia in 1988; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kirsch was devoted to his two children, Jodie Kirsch Lachman and Joel Kirsch, and adored being Poppy to his four grandchildren; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby honors and recognizes Ted Kirsch for his lifelong commitment to educating children, empowering and supporting teachers, and strengthening the Labor movement.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Ted Kirsch, further evidencing the sincere admiration and respect of this legislative body.