

Legislation Text

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Recognizing and honoring Herb Douglas, the oldest living African American Olympic medalist, for his many life achievements, on and off the track.

WHEREAS, Herb Douglas is a native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, but has resided in the Wynnefield neighborhood of Philadelphia for many years; and

WHEREAS, Herb Douglas broke records at the University of Pittsburgh, where he won four NCAA championships in the long jump and one in the 100-yard dash, and three AAU long-jump titles. He held the university's long-jump record for 33 years. He also played football at Pitt, becoming the second African American player to score a touchdown against Notre Dame; and

WHEREAS, Douglas participated in the 1942 Penn Relays in Philadelphia. He was a member of the 440-yard relay team from Xavier University of Louisiana, a Historically Black University. Douglas' team won with a time of 41.7 seconds, making Xavier the first HBCU champion at the Penn Relays; and

WHEREAS, At just 26-years-old, Douglas participated in the 1948 Olympic Games in London, earning a bronze medal in the long-jump competition. During the tournament, Douglas jumped 24 feet and nine inches; and

WHEREAS, Douglas was also a trailblazer in the business world. After joining the fine wine and spirits distributor Schieffelin & Co. (now Moët/Hennessy USA) in 1963, he became the third African American in history to reach the level of Vice President of a national company. He worked at the company for 30 years; and

WHEREAS, Douglas has mentored subsequent Olympic gold medalists, such as Edwin Moses and Roger Kingdom; and

WHEREAS, In 1980, Douglas co-founded the Jesse Owens Foundation, named after his long-time friend, Jesse Owens, the famous African American track and field athlete, who earned four gold medals at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin; and

WHEREAS, Douglas celebrated his 99th birthday on March 9, 2021. He is the oldest living African American Olympic medalist; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby recognizes and honors Herb Douglas, the oldest living African American Olympic medalist, for his many life achievements, on and off the track.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Herb Douglas as evidence of the sincere appreciation and respect of this legislative body.

