Legislation Text

File #: 210337, **Version:** 0

Honoring the life and legacy of Frank L. Stephens, Jr., and recognizing his work at the Free Library of Philadelphia and his dedication to elevating Black Art and Stories.

WHEREAS, Frank L. Stephens Jr. was the first Black manager at the Free Library of Philadelphia. He had a career that spanned 40 years, and he touched many people through more than 300 major exhibits that made the Library a must-see; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Stephens started his role at the Library as an Illustrator. In 1965, he became the Exhibits Manager, and in 1990, he became the Arts and Graphics Administrator; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Stephens not only curated powerful exhibits at the Library, but he created his own art as well. Mr. Stephens was an Illustrator, and he also worked as an Artist and Photographer with famed singer Marian Anderson; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his career, Mr. Stephens won countless awards for his paintings, exhibits, brochures, programs, posters, and more, the first being the Award of Esteem awarded to him by the United States Naval Supply Depot in 1964; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Stephens' love of art was prevalent throughout his whole life. As a young boy, his passion was evident, but seemed out of reach. However, through the support and encouragement of his mother, Mr. Stephens was able to pursue his art. He graduated from Bok Vocational Technical High School, where he studied commercial art; and

WHEREAS, After high school, in 1950, Mr. Stephens enlisted in the Air Force. He quickly rose in ranks and become a Sergeant at age 19 ,where he was placed in charge of the Graphic Art Unit at Harlingen Air Force Base in Texas. He later attended the Hussian School of Art (now known as Hussian College) and graduated from the Philadelphia College of Art (now known as the University of the Arts) in 1961 with a Degree in Advertising Design; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Stephens leaves behind his wife Jeannette Stephens, his sons Frank Stephens III and Ronald Stephens, Sr., along with a brother and five grandchildren; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA Hereby honors the life and legacy of Frank Stephens, Jr., and recognizes his work at the Free Library of Philadelphia and his dedication to elevating Black Art and Stories.

FURTHER RESOLVED That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Jeannette Stephens as evidence of the sincere admiration and respect of this legislative body.