Legislation Text

File #: 220398, **Version:** 0

Renaming the 4000 block of Filbert Street “Elsie Wise Way,” to honor the life and legacy of Elsie Wise, civic leader and founder of the West Powelton Steppers and Drum Team.

WHEREAS, Elsie Lena Mauldin Wise was a native of Philadelphia, born in 1928 to Edwin and Flossie Mauldin, and raised in Powelton, where she lived until her death on December 2, 2020. She was a product of Philadelphia public schools, and graduated from West Philadelphia High School; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Wise committed her life to leadership and service both personally and professionally. She began her 30-year career in civil service in 1961 as a caseworker for the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services; and

WHEREAS, Known fondly as “everybody’s grandmother,” Mrs. Wise founded the West Powelton Steppers and Drum Team in 1991, a safe haven for youth who needed a creative outlet that would keep them away from the violence in their West Philadelphia neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, In the time since its inception, the West Powelton Drum Team has become the official drum line of the Philadelphia 76ers, and the full drill team has performed nationwide, including performances in Las Vegas and Disney’s Universal Studios in Florida; and

WHEREAS; Mrs. Wise dedicated her life to serving her neighborhood by increasing civic empowerment and engagement. She served as a Democratic Committeeperson for 60 years, executive director of the West Powelton Concerned Community Council and board member of the People’s Emergency Center Community Development Corp.; and

WHEREAS; In 2015, the People’s Emergency Center CDC named the Bigham Leatherberry Wise Place affordable housing apartment building for Mrs. Wise and two other affordable housing advocates, for their decades of community organizing around providing affordable housing for Philadelphians; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Wise is survived by her daughter Patricia, Son Aaron, and a godson whom she lovingly raised, as well as five grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, and a host of family and friends who will continue her legacy of community empowerment; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Renames the 4000 Block of Filbert Street “Elsie Wise Way,” to honor the life and legacy of Elsie Wise, civic leader and founder of the West Powelton Steppers and Drum Team.