

Legislation Text

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Also naming South 13th Street, between Spruce and Locust Streets, as “Jeff Guaracino Way” for his lifelong commitment to Philadelphia and the surrounding counties.

WHEREAS, Jeff Guaracino has a 20-year track record of success in tourism and organizational management with expertise in growth, change and collaboration. As president and CEO of VISIT PHILADELPHIA®, Guaracino was charged with building Greater Philadelphia’s image, driving visitation and boosting the economy through day and overnight leisure visitations. In 2020, leisure visitation to the five-county region (comprised of Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties) made up 94% of all tourism; and

WHEREAS, Guaracino consistently forged creative and innovative partnerships with organizations such as the James Beard Foundation, Live Nation, Comcast/NBCUniversal and the City of Philadelphia. He also had significant crisis-management experience, which guided his work to rebuild the hospitality and tourism sector with a cross-functional team of municipal, regional and state leaders in the wake of COVID-19. In 2020, 30 million people visited Greater Philadelphia, creating \$6.81 billion in economic impact; and

WHEREAS, Under Guaracino’s leadership during the COVID-19 crisis, VISIT PHILADELPHIA continued to fulfill its mission through omni-channel marketing efforts. Highlights include Philly Live Weekends, a Facebook-based collaboration with NBC10; Love + Grit, a podcast focused on authentic and diverse Philadelphia stories; a Black- and Brown-owned business initiative that culminated in City Council’s Shop Black Business Friday declaration; and two marketing campaigns for various stages of the pandemic: Our Turn to Tourist, which drove regional spending at the height of the lockdown, and Pack Light. Plan Big. For Philly., which highlights the ease, accessibility and wonder of the reopened region. Thanks, in part, to this work, Philadelphia outpaced 2021 hotel forecasts by 43% and experienced the quickest recovery to 2019 levels among competitive East Coast destinations, according to data released by STR and Tourism Economics in July 2021; and

WHEREAS, Guaracino previously served as president and CEO of Welcome America, Inc., and executive director of the Atlantic City Alliance. Before being named to lead VISIT PHILADELPHIA, Guaracino spent 11 years at the organization - from 2001 through 2012 - as a director, and later, as vice president of communications; and

WHEREAS, Guaracino sat on the board of directors for the U.S. Travel Association, Global Philadelphia Association, Independence Visitor Center Corporation, Welcome America, Inc., Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau, Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld Fund and The Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia. In 2020, he was named vice chair of the Chamber’s Regional Tourism, Arts and Cultural Recovery committee. He also served on the Philadelphia International Airport’s advisory board and Temple University’s School of Sport, Tourism & Hospitality Management Board of Visitors; and

WHEREAS, Guaracino was a highly sought-after writer and speaker on the topics of leisure tourism, marketing and LGBT travel, stemming from his work on the groundbreaking 2003 VISIT PHILADELPHIA campaign

Philadelphia - Get Your History Straight And Your Nightlife Gay®. He is the author of two books: 2007's Gay and Lesbian Tourism: The Essential Guide to Marketing and 2017's Handbook of LGBT Tourism and Hospitality: A Guide for Business Practice, co-authored by Ed Salvato. In addition, he also authored a travel column for the Philadelphia Gay News since 2009; and

WHEREAS, Guaracino, was a Philadelphia native, who resided in Society Hill and was a graduate of Rowan University and Camden County Community College whose positive impact on the tourism industry in Philadelphia cannot be overstated; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That South 13th Street, between Spruce Street and Locust Street in the City of Philadelphia, shall henceforth also be known as "Jeff Guaracino Way".