



Legislation Text

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Recognizing and honoring Nitza Walesca Sierra, community engagement teaching artist & studio coordinator at the Clay studio.

WHEREAS, Nitza Sierra was born in the Bronx and raised in Northern Philadelphia. Nitza is a Caribeña ceramic artist and educator whose work combines a multitude of influences to communicate nuanced ideas of the self. It is through her artistic practice that Nitza embodies a sense of deep and meaningful ancestral connection to her place of origin: La Isla del Encanto, Puerto Rico; and

WHEREAS, Inspired by her mother's strong community presence, Nitza creates vessels rooted in the strength and tenacity of matriarchal femininity. The works are also deeply informed by both Taino and African cultures, building upon centuries of ceramic history to create timeless motifs. These traditions infuse Nitza's work with an elegance and symmetry that evidence the care in their creation. Each piece of ceramic holds a sacred sense of place, belonging, and cultural specificity that cannot be ignored; and

WHEREAS, Nitza currently has 18 vessels on exhibition at the Philadelphia International Airport Terminal A. They are on display until January, 2025. She also has a mini exhibition of her bowls at the Clay Arts Center in Port Chester, New York.; and

WHEREAS, Since 1993, Nitza's ceramic skill has grown along with her impact. She is not professionally trained and identifies her pottery abilities as a natural gift given passed on through her heritage. Her pieces can be found all over the world, and she notes the support of friends, family, and fellow ceramic artists in her growth. Nitza's mantra is "Clay Heals Minds", and her life has been a practice in embracing this for herself, as well as introducing this concept to her community; and

WHEREAS, As an artist, Nitza Walesca creates innovative vessels based on traditional forms and adorns them with Taino symbols. Her indigenous Puerto Rican, Taino heritage serves as a strong inspiration. Nitza was introduced to ceramic art by her high school art teacher, and then continued her education through The Clay Studio. She is a Claymobile Teaching Artist and Community Engagement Assistant at The Clay Studio, as well as a resident of South Kensington; and

WHEREAS, Nitza has taught in several studios throughout her thirty years of experience, including local institutions such as Tyler School of Art, Moore College of Art and Design, The Clay Studio, The Norris Square Civic Association, Black Hound Studio, and others where she prioritizes the impact of reintroducing ceramic arts to black and brown communities. Nitza's most recent exhibition at The Clay Studio is called Mi Herencia, Mis Raices or My Heritage, My Roots; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby recognizes and honors Nitza Walesca Sierra, Community Engagement Teaching Artist & Studio Coordinator at The Clay Studio.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be sent to Nitza Walesca Sierra as evidence of the sincere respect and admiration of this legislative body.

