



Legislation Text

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Honoring the life and legacy of internationally renowned jazz legend Benny Golson.

WHEREAS, The multitalented Benny Golson was born on January 25, 1929 in Philadelphia. Golson began learning piano at the age of 9, then switched to the saxophone at the age of 14. While a student at Benjamin Franklin High School, he played alongside several other promising young musicians including John Coltrane, Red Garland, and Jimmy Heath; and

WHEREAS, After graduating from Howard University, Golson then joined Bull Moose Jackson's band in 1951. Arranging and composing music became a serious pursuit and passion for Golson at the early encouragement of composer-arranger Tadd Dameron; and

WHEREAS, He then began performing with Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, with whom he recorded the classic *Moanin'* in 1958; and

WHEREAS, Also in 1958, at age 28, he was part of the most famous photograph in jazz - A Great Day in Harlem, a black-and-white photograph of 57 jazz musicians in Harlem, New York, taken by freelance photographer Art Kane for *Esquire* magazine on August 12, 1958; and

WHEREAS, Golson's writing skills blossomed working with the Jazz Messengers as he contributed pieces for the band that have forever entered the jazz canon, including "Along Came Betty", "Blues March", and "I Remember Clifford"; and

WHEREAS, From 1959 to 1962, Golson co-led the Jazztet with Art Farmer, mainly playing his own compositions. Golson then left jazz entirely to concentrate on studio and orchestral work for 12 years; and

WHEREAS, During this time Golson composed music for television shows such Mannix, Ironside, Room 222, M*A*S*H, The Partridge Family, and Mission: Impossible, before returning to make and record jazz music in the 1970s. In 1982, he reorganized the Jazztet; and

WHEREAS, In 1996, Golson received the Jazz Masters Award from the National Endowment of the Arts, and in 1999 Golson was awarded an honorary doctorate of music from Berklee College of Music. Howard University's Jazz Studies program created a prestigious award in his honor called the Benny Golson Jazz Master Award in 1996; and

WHEREAS, Golson received the Mellon Living Legend Legacy Award presented by the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation at a ceremony at the Kennedy Center in 2007, and in 2009 Golson was inducted into the International Academy of Jazz Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, Golson was an active mentor, educator, lecturer, and conducted many workshops and clinics. His lifetime of accolades and achievements in Jazz reflect the immense artistic talent Philadelphia always had and always will produce; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby honors the life and legacy of internationally renowned jazz legend Benny Golson.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Benny Golson as evidence of the true and sincere admiration and respect of this legislative body.