

Legislation Text

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Honoring the Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection for its 40th Year Anniversary at Temple University where it collects, preserves, and disseminates the history and culture of the global Black experience.

WHEREAS, After playing fullback for the Pennsylvania State University football team and serving as a member of the United States Army, Mr. Blockson traveled around the world collecting rare African, African-American and African-Caribbean publications; and

WHEREAS, After 30 years of collecting artifacts touching on all aspects of the history and culture of Africans, Mr. Blockson decided to donate his collection to Temple University in Philadelphia. He selected Temple University because of its location in the heart of the African American community in North Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, The collection holds items dating back to 1581 and includes items from the Haitian Revolution, first-edition works of Phyllis Wheatley, Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass and W.E.B. DuBois as well as the John W. Mosley Photograph Collection; and

WHEREAS, The collection is one of the nation's leading research facilities and currently holds over 700,000 items. It provides materials, public programs, exhibitions and services for research scholars, students and the community in fields such as history, American studies, Africana studies, and many regional/area disciplines; and

WHEREAS, The Blockson Collection was not Mr. Blockson's sole project. He was also the author of 13 books touching on topics such as the Underground Railroad, Haitian Revolution, and Black genealogy. Even with having a lifetime of accomplishments, Mr. Blockson's greatest achievement was getting a state historical marker placed at Penn's Landing in Philadelphia recognizing the role Pennsylvania and Philadelphia played in the Atlantic Slave Trade; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Blockson passed away in June of 2023, but his legacy lives on in the Charles L. Blockson Afro-American collection; and

WHEREAS, This month, a display has been erected in Philadelphia's City Hall to celebrate the 40 years of the Blockson Collection at Temple University, highlighting the five distinct areas of Charles L. Blockson's career, including Mr. Blockson's contributions as an author, bibliophile, historian, collector, and athlete displaying some of the 700,000 treasures housed in the collection; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby honors the Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection for its 40th Year Anniversary at Temple University where it collects, preserves, and disseminates the history and culture of the global Black experience.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this Resolution be presented to The Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, further showcasing the sincere respect and admiration of this legislative body.

