



City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Legislation Text

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Declaring May 21, 2025, as Frank Kameny Day in the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, Franklin Edward Kameny was born on May 21, 1925 to parents Emil and Rae Beck Kameny in Queens, New York. From an early age, Frank knew he wanted to be a scientist. In 1941, Frank graduated from Richmond Hill High School at the age of 16; and

WHEREAS, Too young for the draft, in May 1943, Frank enlisted in the U.S. Army to participate in the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP), a program that allowed enlisted men to pursue college courses in math, engineering, and science. He underwent basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia and began studying mechanical engineering; and

WHEREAS, During World War II, Frank served as Private First Class, infantry private in Europe, and his unit was the 58th Armored Infantry Battalion, 8th Armored Division, 9th Army; and

WHEREAS, Frank received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Physics from Queens College, a Master of Science degree in Astronomy from Harvard University, and a Ph.D. in Astronomy from Harvard University; and

WHEREAS, In July 1957, Frank started his dream job as an astronomer with the U.S. Army Map Service in Washington, D.C. His role was to supervise observation teams and collect data on stellar occultations; and

WHEREAS, In October 1957, Frank was fired from the U.S. Army Map Service and barred from future employment by the federal government because he was gay. A background investigation that uncovered information about Kameny's homosexuality led him to his firing for "immoral behavior" due to his sexual orientation; and

WHEREAS, Frank fought his dismissal through the courts, taking his case to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1960. The Supreme Court declined to review his case, thereby upholding the lower court's ruling, a decision which ended Frank's career as an astronomer and civil servant; and

WHEREAS, As a result of this experience, Frank dedicated the rest of his life to LGBTQ+ activism. He co-founded the Mattachine Society of Washington, D.C. in 1961, founded the East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO) in 1963, organized Annual Reminders demonstrations in 1965 for LGBT equality, and partnered with the Daughters of Bilitis to successfully have the American Psychiatric Association's classification of homosexuality as a mental illness overturned in 1973; and

WHEREAS, In 1975, Frank was instrumental in the federal government lifting its ban on lesbian and gay employees in civil service. Two years later, Frank became the first openly gay person to run for Congress. He also takes credit for coining the term "Gay is Good," and fought throughout his life for LGBTQ+ equality by rejecting the idea that homosexuality is inferior to heterosexuality; and

WHEREAS, Frank Kameny lived in Washington, D.C. until his death in 2011. He was a pivotal figure in the early LGBTQ+ rights movement, his lifetime of work and activism paved the way for advancements in LGBTQ+ rights and equality that continue to be essential civil rights we enjoy today. On the occasion of what would have been his 100th birthday; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby declares May 21, 2025, as Frank Kameny Day in the City of Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this Resolution be presented to organizers of Kameny 100 in Washington D.C. as evidence of the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.