File #: 250750, **Version:** 0

Also naming Jefferson Street between Broad Street and 13th Street as "Donald 'Ducky' Birts Way"

WHEREAS, Donald "Ducky" Birts was born in Camden, New Jersey, raised alongside his four siblings by the guiding force of his life, his late mother Frankie Mae Birts; and

WHEREAS, Birts attended Camden High School, where he excelled at basketball, football, baseball and gymnastics. Birts inspired by the guidance from his principal at Hatch Junior High School in Camden, Mr. R. Turner Dickerson, he eventually served as an assistant coach and later as a coach at his alma mater; and

WHEREAS, 'Ducky' became the mainstay of his family at an early age, helping his mother make ends meet by selling newspapers and subsequently obtaining a job at the Garden State Park Racetrack in Cherry Hill, New Jersey as a shoeshine boy; and

WHEREAS, 'Ducky' continued to work multiple jobs in his life, he was employed at the Camden, New Jersey Shipyard, working on the "Kitty Hawk." He was later employed at Walmart Tailors, first working as a stock boy and, at intervals, moving up to salesman, to manager and eventually to buyer; and

WHEREAS, It was through this job that he realized his "dream," to own a business. He was able to make this dream a reality in 1964, when he opened a haberdashery called "Ducky's Dashery" at 1119 Haddon Avenue in Camden. In 1968, he relocated to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where he met the Reverend Dr. Leon Howard Sullivan, the Pastor of Zion Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Leon Howard Sullivan became a helping hand in his quest to establish "Ducky's Dashery" in North Philadelphia. The historical site is located at Progress Plaza, the first multimillion-dollar shopping center, built, developed, continuously owned, and managed by African Americans in America; and

WHEREAS, Although this task was met with many obstacles, he persevered with resilience and kept going, never giving up. He was able to meet people on all levels regardless of their race or ethnic origin, as he is a charismatic person with a passion for helping others; and

WHEREAS, Beyond being a businessman, 'Ducky' is also a valued member of his community; for example, as an active member of Zion Baptist Church under the pastorate of the late Reverend Dr. Leon Howard Sullivan, where he found time to align himself with several civic and fraternal organizations. Donald Birts was raised as a Master Mason in the James W. Bell-Allen Lodge No. 97 under the Honorable Earl C. Abrams Most Worshipful Grandmaster of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania. Currently, he is a member of Mt. Lebanon No. 9 Lodge in Philadelphia, under the Honorable Timothy Jerome Cager No. 117 Most Worshipful Grandmaster of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, 'Ducky' is a longtime member in good standing with the Philadelphia NAACP Branch; former Executive Committee Member; chaired the Political Action Committee; served as Vice President under the leadership and presidency of J. Whyatt Mondesire; and

WHEREAS, He was the Circulation Manager of the Philadelphia Sunday Sun Newspaper; Member of the Philadelphia Club of Frontiers International; Member of the Police Advisory Board of the 14th District in Philadelphia; Member of the Board of Directors of Progress Investment Associates and Member of the Board of Directors of the Leon H. Sullivan Charitable Trust; and

WHEREAS, He was an active member of the local political scene, serving as a committee person of the 50th Ward, 2nd Division. With the Honorable Marian B. Tasco as Ward Leader, he served on the Executive Committee. With his wide experience in politics, he later served as Special Assistant to U.S. Congressman William H. Gray III, 2nd Congressional District; and

WHEREAS, He also coached with the Charles Baker League and a Trustee of the Sonny Hill League. 'Ducky' was the Project Director of the Wade Wilson Football Classic of Cheyney University from 1982 until 1997. During that time, more than 200 distinguished students received scholarships; and

WHEREAS, 'Ducky' was inducted into the Hall of Fame by the Al Carino Basketball Club of South Jersey in February 1995. During Unity Week of the same year, in Philadelphia, he became the recipient of the WDAS AM/FM Award for "preserving and perpetuating our cultural heritage." On October 16, 1999, he received a most prestigious award from Laborers Local 332, "The Sammie Award" under the leadership of Samuel Staten, Sr.; and

WHEREAS, Although these are just a few of his many accolades, he has earned over 140 awards and citations, each one rightly awarded for his endless compassion; and

WHEREAS, Ducky is married to Linda Best-Bey, who completes him in every aspect of his life. Ducky has two sons, Mark and David; a daughter, Shawn; and seven grandchildren; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Jefferson Street between Broad Street and 13th Street shall also be named as "Donald 'Ducky' Birts Way"

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Donald "Ducky" Birts as evidence of the true and sincere admiration and respect of this legislative body.

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