



City of Philadelphia

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

RESOLUTION NO. 260613

Introduced June 4, 2026

Councilmember Gauthier

RESOLUTION

Also naming the 3600 Block of Market Street as “Walt Palmer-Black Bottom Way” to honor Dr. Walter Palmer and his services and contributions to the Black Bottom and the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, Walter Palmer is a civil rights activist, a West Philadelphia historian, and an award-winning professor with degrees from the University of Pennsylvania and Cheyney University with his Juris Doctorate from Howard University; and

WHEREAS, At age 21, Palmer founded the W.D. Palmer Foundation which has supported many projects fighting against racial segregation in education, business, politics, and healthcare; and

WHEREAS, In 1957, Palmer was named director of Cardiopulmonary Care at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, becoming one of the first Black and youngest directors in the nation and helping to desegregate two major Philadelphia hospitals; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the 1960s, Palmer founded and organized many grassroots movements such as the Black People’s Unity Movement and the International Anti-War Peace Movement Conference. Palmer created and co-founded numerous spaces for Black Americans to come together, educate, and bring awareness to discrimination that they face in historically white spaces, such as the Black Student Union and Black Student League of Temple University and the University of Pennsylvania, and the Philadelphia City-wide Black Ministries Organization; and

WHEREAS, In 1976, Palmer created the Black Bottom Community Association to preserve the history of displaced populations and educate the public about the resistance of Black Bottom community members who fought against physical and culture erasure at the hands of the West Philadelphia Corporation, University of Pennsylvania, and Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority; and

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WHEREAS, Despite this thriving Black community being displaced in the name of “Urban Renewal,” Palmer has worked tirelessly to ensure that its history remains protected and its spirit stands tall. His documentation is the reason that so many historians and storytellers of eminent domain and the dangers of institutional expansion know the Black Bottom as a cautionary tale. This year, more of his efforts will bear fruit in the form of a state-approved historical marker, a City resolution commemorating the Black Bottom neighborhood name, and a petition with thousands of signatures calling for reparations; and

WHEREAS, Palmer has received many awards and recognition for his leadership in social justice. He is the founder of The Center on American Racism and Social Justice at the UPenn School of Social Policy and Practice and for decades has taught courses in American Racism, Institutional Racism, and Social Change; and

WHEREAS, Palmer is an excellent man who has dedicated himself to community service and breaking systemic barriers for Black Americans. He has educated the public on health, economic, and political disparities for Black Americans. Palmer is an institution of history for the Black Bottom community and truly represents what community leaders are; and now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the 3600 Block of Market Street also be named as “Walt Palmer-Black Bottom Way” to honor the life of Dr. Walter Palmer and his service to the Black Bottom and the City of Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this Resolution be presented to Dr. Walter Palmer, in recognition of this occasion, further evidencing the sincere admiration and respect of this legislative body.