



## Text File

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**Committee:** City Council

**Status:** Adopted

WHEREAS, in commemoration of African American History month, Council wishes to honor the achievements and community contributions of noted figures in the City of Pittsburgh, on this occasion offering due respect to Manchester resident Reverend Dr. James J. Robinson and his wife, Dr. Betty Robinson; and,

WHEREAS, the Rev. James J. Robinson first arrived to Manchester in 1962 as a Pastor to the Bidwell Church with his wife Betty Robinson, where they eventually settled on a permanent move in 1967 during a time the area witnessed a rapid growth in its African American population; and,

WHEREAS, a community member who continues to battle for greater equity on behalf of the disadvantaged, Rev. Robinson assumed an active role in the Civil Rights struggle, taking part of a coordinating committee composed of local ministers and led by the Bidwell Church that challenged and stood up against slum landlords which had been providing inadequate housing to African Americans, a battle which eventually led to the creation of the Housing Court that stands to this day; and,

WHEREAS, in the late sixties Manchester was devoid of a recreation center, prompting Rev. Robinson and wife Betty Robinson to purchase a plumbing warehouse that became the home of Bidwell Education Music & Recreation Center, which received a \$450,000 investment from the Bidwell Church and Pittsburgh Presbytery to revamp the building as a place where youngsters could come to roller-skate, take ballet and music lessons, and which housed an after school program that is still up and running 40 years later; and,

WHEREAS, the Manchester Youth Development Center (MYDC) was co-founded by Rev. James and Dr. Betty Robinson in 1972 out of the former Bidwell Education Music & Recreation Center to address the education and general support needs of Manchester youth, its current goal being to provide education, artistic, and recreational experiences to predominately minority disadvantaged children between the ages of 3 and 18 years; and,

WHEREAS, Rev. Robinson continues to fight for the betterment of the Manchester community, recently evidenced in a struggle initiated in January of 2010 against the proposed demolition of 84 buildings in the neighborhood, an issue the Historic Review Commission was warned would lead to greater crime rates and decreased property values if approved;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh does hereby commend the work of Reverend Dr. James J. Robinson and Dr. Betty Robinson, whose tireless commitment to advocate for the greater good of their community and on behalf of those less fortunate is an example for all Pittsburghers to look up to and follow;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh does hereby declare February 22, 2011 to be "Reverend Dr. James J. Robinson and Dr. Betty Robinson Day" in the City of Pittsburgh.