



City of Pittsburgh

510 City-County Building
414 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Text File

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Committee: City Council

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WHEREAS, Fannetta Nelson Gordon was born November 29, 1919 in Haneville, Alabama. She was the fifth and youngest child of Frank Nelson and Sophia Bailey Nelson. A gifted classical pianist since childhood, she was awarded a scholarship to study at Fillion Studios, which was one of the most prestigious schools in the area at the time. Madame Dawson, founder of the National Negro Opera Company, was her mentor; and

WHEREAS, in her teens she traveled and performed with Madame Dawson's troupe, where she had many memorable experiences. Her career included accompanying W.C. Handy at a Forbes Field Event when she was just fourteen, accompanying the legendary Leontyne Price at Ms. Price's first professional performance, and for many years as a young adult she operated the Gordon School for Piano and Dance where she had her own concert at Carnegie Hall in; and

WHEREAS, In 1941 Mrs. Gordon earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of Pittsburgh where she was honored with four golden keys: for having the highest scholarship in the French Department for four years, for four years service as a pianist for the Pitt Symphony Orchestra, for three years membership in the Pitt Girls Choir, and for membership in Sigma Kappa Phi honorary foreign language fraternity. She subsequently earned a Master of Education at Pitt in 1960, certificates in Germany for German Education, and a Master of Arts from the University of Washington in 1967; and

WHEREAS, from 1955 to 1969 Mrs. Gordon taught German and English at the secondary level in the Pittsburgh Public Schools. Then in 1969 she was appointed by Governor Shafer to the Pennsylvania Department of Education as Senior Advisor for English, Reading, Oral Communications and Foreign Languages; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Gordon was a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, the NAACP, Holy Cross Episcopal Church and many other professional and philanthropic organizations. She passed August 19, 2008 at the age of 88.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh does hereby recognize and commend the late Fannetta Nelson Gordon for her commitment to our music, education, and her relentless dedication to the commonwealth of Pennsylvania; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh does hereby proclaim Thursday, April 7, 2011, to be designated, "Fannetta Nelson Gordon" day in the City of Pittsburgh.