



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, Sophia P. Nelson was born January 10, 1918, in Lowndes County, Alabama. Sophia was the fourth of the five children born to Frank Nelson and Sophia Bailey Nelson. She was six years old when the family moved to the Brushton Area of the City of Pittsburgh, where she attended Crecent Elementary, Baxter Junior High and Westinghouse High School. She graduated 1934, becoming the first Black valedictorian to graduate from Westinghouse High School; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Nelson furthered her education and obtained her Bachelors Degree from the University of Pittsburgh. She also attended Atlanta University (now known as Clark Atlanta University) and obtained her Masters Degree. Sophia also taught at St. Phillips Jr. College in San Antonio Texas, as well as, Livingstone College in North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, In 1949, she returned to the University of Pittsburgh to earn a Masters Degree in 1949 subsequently thereafter earned a Doctorate in 1951. Ms. Nelson went on to become an English professor at West Virginia State College in Institute (now Dunbar). There, she was elected Chairman of the English Department; and

WHEREAS, Sophia has served as a lifetime member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, and as a member of the NAACP. For many years she was a member of the National Council of Teachers of English, and advisor to the Lambda Iota Tau National Literary Society. She continues to reside in St. Albans, West Virginia.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh does hereby recognize and commend Ms. Sophia P. Nelson for achieving such accomplishments at some of America's most difficult times and for her adamant dedication to education and our communities; and

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