



City of Pittsburgh

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

Text File

Introduced: 5/14/2013

Bill No: 2013-1535, **Version:** 1

Committee: City Council

Status: Adopted

WHEREAS, Dr. Vernell Lillie, hired as an associate professor at the University of Pittsburgh, retired as Professor Emeritus in the University of Pittsburgh's Africana Studies Department in 2011. Dr. Lillie and Kuntu Repertory were supported early on by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright August Wilson; and,

WHEREAS, Dr. Vernell Lillie and Kuntu produced plays not just by familiar names such as August Wilson or Lorraine Hansberry, but by relatively unknown Black playwrights. Dr. Lillie helped a number of successful black theater professionals get their start, including Montae Russell, a nationally known Black actor who started with Kuntu as a teenager and went on to a long run on television's "ER," and in August Wilson's plays, in Pittsburgh, on Broadway and beyond ; and,

WHEREAS, Dr, Vernell A. Lillie aimed to give visibility to the African American presence at the University of Pittsburgh and to involve diverse groups in examining the Black experience in America and throughout the world; and,

WHEREAS, Vernell A. Lillie, artistic director, producer of theater drama, lecturer and writer, founded Kuntu Repertory Theatre in 1974 for the purpose of presenting the works of Rob Penny and other African American writers. Vernell Lillie and Kuntu produced ten of Rob Penny's plays.

WHEREAS, Kuntu Repertory Theatre, Pittsburgh's oldest African-American theater company, lowers its final curtain on May 17, 2013, after nearly a 40-year run ; and,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh does hereby commend; Dr. Vernell A. Lillie for her commitment to African- American theater in the City of Pittsburgh and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh does hereby declare Friday, May, 17 , 2013, to be "*Dr Vernell Lillie Day*" in the City of Pittsburgh.