



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, James Baldwin was born August 2, 1924 in Harlem, New York. He was raised by his mother, Emma James and stepfather, David Baldwin, a Baptist minister. Early in life he discovered his passion for writing while attending Dewitt Clinton High School in the Bronx. He published an abundance of poems, plays and short stories in the high school magazine which demonstrated his understanding for sophisticated literary devices. ; and,

WHEREAS, In 1948, Mr. Baldwin moved to Paris, France where he hoped that he would find enough distance from the American society he grew up in to write about it. He published his first novel in 1953 titled "Go Tell It on the Mountain which was an autobiography about growing up in Harlem. This novel is widely considered an American classic; and,

WHEREAS In the early 1960s, overwhelmed by a sense of responsibility to the times, Mr. Baldwin returned to the United States to take part in the civil rights movement. It was during this time while traveling through the South that he created, arguably, his most incendiary novel about Black identity and the state of racial struggle titled "The Fire Next Time". The book was so explosive it landed him on the cover of Time Magazine, and,

WHEREAS Mr. Baldwin died in 1987 of stomach cancer but, his writings have propelled him to be one of the most important and vocal advocates for equality to date. His literary works are translated into 26 different languages around the world; and,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED Mr. Baldwin's messages of equality and human rights have touched the lives of Pittsburgh readers and students, as well as, millions of lives around the world; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh does hereby declare Tuesday, July 29, 2014, to be "**James Baldwin Day**" in the City of Pittsburgh.