



City of Pittsburgh

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

Text File

Introduced: 7/12/2024

Bill No: 2024-0754, **Version:** 1

Committee: City Council

Status: Adopted

WHEREAS, John Robert Lewis was born close to Troy, Alabama, on February 21, 1940, the third of ten children of Willie Mae (née Carter) and Eddie Lewis. His parents were sharecroppers in rural Pike County, Alabama, of which Troy was the county seat; and,

WHEREAS, around 1960, Lewis graduated from the American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville, Tennessee, and was ordained as a Baptist minister. He then earned a bachelor's degree in religion and philosophy from Fisk University, also a historically black college. He was a member of Phi Beta Sigma fraternity; and,

WHEREAS, as a student, Lewis became an activist in the civil rights movement. He organized sit-ins at segregated lunch counters in Nashville and took part in many other civil rights activities as part of the Nashville Student Movement. The Nashville Sit-in Movement was responsible for the desegregation of lunch counters in the city's downtown; and,

WHEREAS, in 1961, Lewis became one of the 13 original Freedom Riders. In 1963, Lewis, a founding member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), became chairman of the SNCC, and was one of the "Big Six" leaders who organized the March on Washington that summer; and,

WHEREAS, in 1981, Lewis ran for an at-large seat on the Atlanta City Council, winning 69% of the vote and serving on council until 1986, when he ran and won for a seat on the House of Representatives, District 5; and,

WHEREAS, On February 27, 2008, Lewis formally changed his support for Hillary Clinton and endorsed Obama. After Obama clinched the Democratic nomination for president, Lewis stated, "I just wish the others were around to see this day"; and,

WHEREAS, Committees that Lewis served on included The Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Oversight (Chair), and US Congress Joint Committee on taxation. He was also a member of over 40 caucuses; and,

WHEREAS, On July 17, 2020, Lewis died in Atlanta at the age of 80, on the same day in the same city as his friend and fellow civil rights activist C.T. Vivian. Lewis had been the final surviving "Big Six" civil rights icon;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh does hereby declare July 16, 2024 to be "*John Robert Lewis Day*" in the City of Pittsburgh.