



Text File

Introduced: 3/24/2023

Bill No: 2023-1380, **Version:** 1

Committee: City Council

Status: Adopted

WHEREAS, Charles and Frankie Pace individually and collectively revolutionized the spaces in which they occupied in cities such as Chicago and Pittsburgh, in gospel and blues music composition, publishing and civic engagement, and service via the church and in the secular world; and,

WHEREAS, as composer of some of the earliest gospel songs, Charles Pace helped define the style, and as he became increasingly known as a gospel musician, also wrote pop songs under the pseudonym “Charles Henry,” scoring a hit in 1926 with “P. D. Q. Blues.”; and,

WHEREAS, The Pace Jubilee Singers were among the first Black groups to perform on the radio, and they made the first recordings of gospel standards, such as Charles A. Tindley’s “Leave It There.” They also recorded Pace’s adaptations of traditional songs, such as “Oh Death,” “Certainly Lord,” and “Lawdy Won’t You Come By Here.”; and,

WHEREAS, in 1934, Charles accepted a position as music leader at Liberty Baptist Church. That year he also met Frankie, and they quickly established their publishing business, which they called the Old Ship of Zion. They were married in 1935, and one year later they moved to Pittsburgh, where Charles began leading music at Tabernacle Baptist Church on the North Side; and,

WHEREAS, the Paces set up their studio and music store in the Historic Hill District at 2209 Centre Avenue. Frankie helped manage the store and distributed Charles’s music to a nationwide network of Black-owned stores, fueling the growth of gospel music and turning their business into one of the most successful independent Black music publishing businesses of its day; and,

WHEREAS, after witnessing the failures of Pittsburgh’s first Urban Redevelopment Authority, which caused the displacement of many city residents, including 8,000 African Americans from the Lower Hill, Frankie Pace organized the collaboration of organizations that erected the famous billboard at Centre Avenue and Crawford Street, which read: “Attention: City Hall and U.R.A. No Redevelopment Beyond This Point! We Demand Low Income Housing for the Lower Hill.” This billboard and continued activism solidified the importance of “Freedom Corner,” which exists until this day; and,

WHEREAS, Frankie Pace Park, located at 901 Centre Avenue at Washington Place, had a grand opening in November 2021 and was created by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, under the leadership and designs of HDR, LaQuatra Bonci, artists, Jan Rosenthal, Amir Rashidd, Lakeisha Byrd, Darrell Kinsel and Historian, Dr. Kimberly C. Ellis, who also wrote the History Walls and named the park after Frankie Pace; and,

WHEREAS, the Historic Hill Institute, the University of Pittsburgh’s Center for American Music and Ebenezer Church organized “A Gospel Tribute to Charles and Frankie Pace” on March 25, 2023, which included lectures,

Introduced: 3/24/2023

Bill No: 2023-1380, **Version:** 1

Committee: City Council

Status: Adopted

exhibits, the rededication of Frankie Pace Park and Gospel Music celebration with The Heritage Chorale;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh does hereby declare March 28, 2023 to be “***Charles and Frankie Pace Day***” in the City of Pittsburgh.