



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0280-2024, **Version:** *

Res. No. 280

Resolution designating November 30 annually as Shirley Chisholm Day in the City of New York to recognize her contributions as an educator, activist, and elected official, who served the people of New York City with passion and dignity.

By Council Members Louis, Williams, Brooks-Powers, Salaam, Ossé, Hanks, Feliz, Stevens, Marte, Gutiérrez, Narcisse, Fariás, Riley, Cabán, Hudson and Avilés

Whereas, Shirley Anita St. Hill Chisholm was born in Brooklyn on November 30, 1924, to Charles St. Hill, a factory worker from Guyana, and Ruby Seale St. Hill, a seamstress from Barbados; and

Whereas, Having spent some years of her childhood in Barbados with her grandmother, she returned to Brooklyn and became an accomplished graduate of Brooklyn Girls' High in 1942 and Brooklyn College in 1946; and

Whereas, She began her career teaching in a Harlem childcare center and, in 1952, earned a master's degree from Teachers College, Columbia University, before serving as the director of a childcare center and, eventually, as a consultant to the New York City (NYC) Bureau of Child Welfare; and

Whereas, In a collection of reflections from Teachers College alumni, she wrote that she believed that “education is the only real passport out of poverty” and that her only ambition was to “use whatever gifts [she had] to open the door for others”; and

Whereas, Using those gifts in 1964, she became the second Black person ever elected to the New York State (NYS) Assembly; and

Whereas, Just four years later, she became the first Black woman ever elected to the United States (U.S.) House of Representatives, representing New York's 12th Congressional district for seven terms from

1969 to 1983, during which time she was a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus; and

Whereas, In 1972, she became the first Black candidate to seek a major party's presidential nomination and the first woman to run for the Democratic Party's nomination, where she competed in 12 primaries and won 152 delegates (10 percent of those awarded); and

Whereas, Her presidential campaign buttons included her famous slogan *Unbought and Unbossed*, which was also the title of her 1970 autobiography; and

Whereas, After retiring from Congress, she taught at Mount Holyoke College and cofounded the National Political Congress of Black Women; and

Whereas, In her own words, she commented that she wanted "to be remembered as a woman...who dared to be a catalyst of change," another of her popular campaign slogans; and

Whereas, She died on January 1, 2005, and was honored at that time by the New York City Council with an In Memoriam resolution, which noted that "[h]er many successes and achievements, often in the face of often overwhelming odds, are powerful reminders of her faith, her determination and her fierce intelligence" and that, while serving in Congress, "she earned a reputation as a firebrand with a gift for oratory, an outspoken champion of women, minorities and the disadvantaged, and a staunch critic of the Vietnam War"; and

Whereas, In 2015, she was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Barack Obama; and

Whereas, She was honored in 2019 with the dedication of Shirley Chisholm State Park in Brooklyn; and

Whereas, She married Conrad Q. Chisholm, a private investigator, in 1949 and, after their divorce in 1977, married Arthur Hardwick, Jr., a NYS Assembly member from Buffalo, whom she had met while serving in the Assembly; and

Whereas, November 30, 2024, will mark the 100th birthday of Shirley Chisholm; and

Whereas, The designation of a day in her honor is fitting to commemorate, in the words of the New York City Council's In Memoriam resolution, that Shirley Chisholm left NYC as "a richer, better place, with

greater opportunities for minorities and with a government more responsive to the needs of its constituents”;
now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York designates November 30 annually as Shirley Chisholm Day in the City of New York to recognize her contributions as an educator, activist, and elected official, who served the people of New York City with passion and dignity.

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3/8/24
RHP