



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 51

Resolution commemorating the life and mourning the death of singer Lou Rawls.

By Council Members Dickens, Fidler, Foster, James, Koppell, Mendez, Recchia Jr., Sanders Jr., Weprin, White Jr., Yassky and Liu

Whereas, Lou Rawls, the legendary singer and entertainer, died on January 6, 2006 at the age of 72; and
Whereas, This remarkable and beloved performer's versatile and unmistakable voice and impressive four octave vocal range influenced an amazing range of musical genres, from gospel and blues to jazz, soul, pop and R&B over a career spanning nearly five decades; and

Whereas, Lou Rawls, born Louis Allen Rawls in Chicago, Illinois on December 1, 1933, was only seven years old when he began singing in the choir of the Greater Mount Olive Baptist Church; and

Whereas, During his early years Lou Rawls was influenced by jazz and R&B legends such as Billy Eckstine, Arthur Prysock, Joe Williams and Sam Cooke, his friend and classmate at Dunbar Tech High School; and

Whereas, Lou Rawls joined the Teenage Kings of Harmony with Sam Cooke, as well as the Highway QC's before traveling with the Chosen Gospel Singers to Los Angeles, where he made his first recording in 1954 and subsequently joined the gospel group the Pilgrim Travelers; and

Whereas, According to his official biography, Lou Rawls enlisted as a paratrooper in the United States Army in 1956 and served for three years in the 82nd Airborne Division, rising to the rank of Sergeant; and

Whereas, After his service in the United States Army, Lou Rawls returned to Los Angeles and re-joined the Pilgrim Travelers as a lead singer; and

Whereas, In 1959, Lou Rawls was signed by Capitol Records, where his solo debut "I'd Rather Drink

Muddy Water” would lead to more than twenty albums on the Capitol label in less than ten years; and

Whereas, Lou Rawls’ 1966 single “Love Is a Hurtin’ Thing” shot to No.1 on the Billboard R&B chart and in 1976, Lou Rawls recorded his biggest hit, “You’ll Never Find (Another Love Like Mine),” with the record label Philadelphia International, again topping the Billboard R&B charts and selling more than one million copies; and

Whereas, In 2003, Lou Rawls released his final and critically acclaimed album, entitled “Rawls Sings Sinatra,” in the fifth decade of his remarkable recording career; and

Whereas, Over his entire career Lou Rawls would win three Grammy Awards, earn thirteen Grammy nominations, and release one platinum album, five gold albums and one gold single; and

Whereas, Lou Rawls also acted in more than twenty films, including the Oscar winning “Leaving Las Vegas,” as well as many television series and theatre productions, such as “Lou Rawls on Broadway” and “Smokey Joe’s Café;” and

Whereas, Additionally, Lou Rawls’ famous voice is familiar to millions of children through such popular cartoons as “Garfield,” “Hey Arnold!” and “The Rugrats;” and

Whereas, As a committed philanthropist dedicated to leveraging the success of his extraordinary career to help others, in 1980 Lou Rawls began the Lou Rawls Parade of Stars Telethon, a yearly event that has raised more than \$200 million for the United Negro College Fund, and performed concerts for American military personnel around the world with the support of Anheuser Busch Companies, for which Lou Rawls served as a spokesperson; and

Whereas, Lou Rawls will be warmly remembered for his extraordinary vocal achievements and his contributions to America’s rich musical and cultural heritage, as well as for his dedication to philanthropy; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York commemorates the life and mourns the death of Lou Rawls.

JN
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